

FENCELESS MEADOWS

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TALES OF THE SEA

BY
BILL ADAMS



Maud Schneckenburger

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FENCELESS MEADOWS

TAKING DEPARTURE

LIFE has been, for me, a queer dance. There are so very many odd stories in my past. There's a heap of sadness and a deal of mirth. One likes to forget the things that used to hurt so when one was a little chap, all alone in the old world, and, with a sensitive soul, seeking some one to love, and be loved by. Yet one does *not* wish to forget the sadness of life: not really. I don't think so. Sometimes one is tired and at these times would like to think of only the bright things perhaps. But on the whole, looking backward, I can find a little light where the darkest shadows lay. I did not see it then, but to-day I see it. I am inclined to think that pains of mind or body are mighty good things after all. They fetch a fellow friends—who are worth while. They are apt to. For after all, the world holds just one worth while thing—friendship, and I am forever wishing that all of us might sit down together, common human mortals that we be, and take a long long meal at one big table where laughter might be the deep prevailing note, and love might run its full and bubbling course.

When I was not much more than a baby my mother died. That was tough on me: for I was left in care of a middle-aged single woman with stern beliefs and a grim consciousness of her own motherliness. I

think I was a bit sensitive as a small child. It used to hurt me a lot, not physically, but mentally, to get everlastingly licked for nothing at all. My childhood was a succession of beatings. There was not much delight: for in whatever I did I was strictly supervised. I was brought up with the ministry in view. I was taught hymns by the hundred, collects in endless numbers, prayers without end. I used to picture God as a very tall man with a high gold crown on his head, a white night gown on his body, two large bony hands, and a face as hard as the crown He wore. For some weird reason doves flew round and round his head and lambs gambolled at his feet, while row after row of angels, all like Him, but not quite as big, sat on gold stools behind Him playing harps and shouting "allelujah."

Well—at a very early age I saw the sea. It was pointed out to me at evening, from a hill top, by my stern guardian. I immediately wanted to go to sea, to see what lay beyond that strange and peaceful-seeming floor of blue and gray.

I must have been to some extent unmanageable as a boy, for the old maid who raised me came to realize that I was not likely to distinguish the ministry, and finally consented to my becoming a sailor.

I was nearly eighteen when I went to sea. I had had the very best education afforded a boy in England up till that age. But I loathed the system of their public schools. There was no freedom. A boy was part of a machine, and an individual life was almost impossible.

My father died just before I went to sea. He was a very old man, having been at my birth sixty-seven. I was not only very fond of him, but I admired him

with all the fervor of a boy's admiration. I had never seen much of him. He was always away somewhere, in America, and traveling about. As a boy he ran away from home and enlisted in the French Foreign Legion. There he fought with distinction. As a small child I used to play with a long purple scar that was hidden by his beard, that no one but myself knew of. He told me its story one evening when I was alone with him once when he was come to see me. On leaving the Legion, before he was grown to manhood, he came to America. He rode with Sherman to the sea. He told me about that, too.

He never knew the miserable childhood I had, and I never mentioned it; for I forgot it when with him.

When he lay on his death bed he turned to ask me why I was not at my studies and when I replied that I had left school and was going to sea, he smiled—a little proudly. There was a faint quiver of happiness and a sort of pride in his voice as he said, "You'll find it a very hard life, my son." The first part of the sentence did not interest me. "My son," was sweet music. A boy has pride, and loves of his own, unspeakable.

Directly after my father's death—I remember the snow storm when he died, and the robin on the window sill with its feathers puffed out—I was to go to sea with the full rigged *Helenslea*. There was a coldness, a loneliness, in my life that no words can express. I was most eager to be gone, to get away. When some other more fortunate lad than I sailed with the *Helenslea*, and I was left behind, I was bitterly disappointed. Life was a sort of prison, my days still spent under the supervision of a hard old guardian with whom I held nothing in common in any way.

The *Helenslea* left port for Freemantle, West Australia, and has not yet come in: nor has any human eye caught sight of her. No one ever knew what came of her. "Lost with all hands."

Again I was to go to sea. I was to go with the big ship *Monarch*. Once more I was elated at the joyous prospect of getting away from the thing I was supposed to look upon as my home. *I'd never had a home.*

A man who knew a friend of my father sent me a wire on the eve of my departure to join the ship, and warned me not to go to sea with her. I can see the wire plainly now. I don't know how it happened that I took his advice: but I did. Well that I did so. In after years, soon after indeed, I came to know that ship as one of the most evil of all the hell ships on the sea. A ship where men and boys were treated with the most damnable brutality, and with which no man or boy was ever known to stay for more than one passage.

After missing the second ship I was by and by able to get away to sea. I went when I was almost eighteen, with one of the finest of the later day steel square riggers. She was tough and hungry. The food was vile, the treatment hard. Sometimes she swarmed with vermin: but it was none of it her fault. We, the boys who sailed in her half-deck, used to call her "The Old Fast and Furious." She was very fast. The "Furious" was a term of jestful endearment.

I saw queer times with her, and witnessed much of life in many phases. I lost good pals, by the old sea's hardness. I learned to love the simplest of the old earth's poor and common men—men whose lives were

but very little better than were the lives of the galley slaves of old.

Life has been a queer jig—fiddle and tear. I can see the whole picture, looking backward: children seated at the taskmaster's unsympathetic desk, young men eager to know the road toward the Grail, and lacking any one with power to direct their footsteps.

There has been blinding sunshine, there have been enchanted sunsets, and entranced dawns on many many seas. The sun has glimmered on the spires of many a port, on the gentle waters of many a harbor. Life has been very good.

I see pictures, by sea and shore—oftenest by sea: for I am a Sailor, by birth and breeding.

The sea broke me when I was in the prime of my young strength. Sailors did not get a square deal in those days or it would have been otherwise. I had the misfortune to become crippled physically and was compelled to go to the hospital. When, on a morning when 'Frisco bay was windy and fluttered with ships' flags, I looked up to the doctor and asked him "When may I go aboard the ship again, doc?" he replied with one brief word. I believe I know the shock and horror that the dumb bullock feels when the pole ax strikes. The doctor said, "Never," and added "You'll never be fit again."

So that's how life's music plays. It seemed a misfortune then: but looking backward to-day I'd not have it changed. I've got my memories, and they do not fade away. Moreover I've learned a lot more of the seaways of the lives of my fellow men than I could have done perhaps had I remained a strong sound sailor. I've been a' many things since those far away days.

For years and years I saw never a sight of the sea. Every spring when the sap began to flow and the birds to go to their nesting my whole being cried out with longing to be up and gone—I planned each spring a voyage to China, to the Cape, to the Hoogly—to many places, and always since my duty lay with the missis and the kid I gave it up. A voyage would have been the end of me very speedily, for my lungs were done for. I can stand no sea air nowadays. It's a queer thing. Life was devilish hard for the first few years—just the necessity for forgetting the old life that I had loved so well.

I've broken rock for my living, and I've been a wood-chopper. I've been many many things; but I've never forgotten the sunrise at sea, down where the trades blow easy; nor the moon-bow, in misty night watches; nor the songs, and laughter, and the bitter curses, of my old pals. I've always when the most tired been able to see the outspread and beautiful wings of a ship, flying amidst the flocked white albatross, with the snow summits of the Land of Fire to the norrard. It's been pleasant to recall when at labor in some foul aired basement of a packing house the scent of little islands in the sea, the scent of flowers and of fruit. Youth is a jewel indeed. I hope God will never let me lose it: for thus far it is still my own. A man has a hard game to play, I think: but one would ask nothing easier. I'm glad that I was born: that I was made the skipper of my destiny.

Somehow we will contrive to sing to the end, and to go to the last Harbor Master hoping for pardon for our unmeaned roughnesses.

It was twenty-two years after I heard the doctor's

verdict that I found an editor to take my first sea story "The Bosun of the Goldenhorn's Yarn."

I like to sit and think of sing-songs on the tropic evenings, out on the deck, under the stars, when all the world was young and life lay before me. I like to recall hard days, and harder nights at sea in grim weather: when mates and master walked with steely eyes and we, the boys of the "Old Fast and Furious," shivered in silence in our drenched clothing under our frozen oilskins, in our sea-booted feet. I like to hear the laughter of my old comrades, to see their shining eyes in the dim lamp light within the smoky little rust-stained halfdeck.

God—how good life was, and is! One feels like bowing a reverent knee and thanking the Almighty for having given one the joy of living.

What beautiful sights one has to remember! What fine ships I see, with the moon's cold silver on them, and the murmuring sea at their feet. I write thus till I hear my old mates calling me, and bidding me to come and join them at their singing!

"The sea's a hard life, my son."

Thank God for a hard life, a man's life—pray God for the manhood to endure it.

BILL ADAMS.

THE LURE

IT was night time in sailortown, and the crews were gone ashore, leaving silent ships under a cold crescent; the river, flowing golden past them toward the sea, cold as the moon, silent as the ghostly ships upon its breast; along the wooden wharves no foot-fall, no voices, no light; naught but gloomy shadows, and a silence quite unbroken.

Unseen, unheard, the ship's night-watchmen kept their quiet vigil, waiting for the day. Sometimes, a match flared sudden in the murk, a white face loomed a moment—wrinkled, bearded, bright-eyed, and sea-patient. Red sparks moved slowly forth and back beneath shroud shadows; men's bent fingers, guessed rather than seen, moving where those sparks moved—watchmen communing with their peaceful pipes; old men staying to gaze awhile over the ship's railings into slow running waters; turning to stare aloft at mast heads star-companied against a soundless sky; old fellows uttering half-sighs in the night watches; antique, sea-battered men; fathers of the forecastles, decrepitude creeping upon them; their face furrows burned by suns ablaze on every ocean; their limbs bearing old bruise scars gained between the North Cape and the Horn; their palms as rusty leather, well preserved; their fingers hooky; thoughts unspoken. Phantom-like, they moved about the decks, slowly from forecastle to poop, and slowly back—enhancing the fantasy of that fantastic night; dreaming of other ports at other

voyage-endings; of comrades drowned in many seas—old men waiting the rising of the tide, and morning's coming.

In sailortown trees cast shadows on a street filled with the sound of music, and of singing; a street-light flickered from bright windows, from ever-opening, ever-closing doors; men coming and going, singly, or in little companies; their entrance to taverns greeted noisily. Shrill voices echoed. Boisterous tones were noisy on the night.

The trees along the sidewalks, moonlight glimmering through their branches, lamplight reflected upon their rough trunks, seemed as spectators in a galleried theater of night.

Laughter, and the clink of glass on glass, was frequent; sounds as of waters, at a rivermouth, comingling with a sea beyond the bar; flotsam and mud forever lost in that great sea's immensity.

Of all corners of that street the noisiest was that where stood the Golden Eagle tavern; the inn walls obscure behind gnarled tree trunks; lights, ashine from windows, upon branch and leaf; laughter, and song to a piano's tune, reaching the street. Above the door, upon a wide glass plate, the image of a spread-winged eagle hovered directly above those who came and went: a mighty bird of hooked talons and eager beak; seeming as though about to transfix each passer by but ever disappointed of his prey.

Suddenly, the laughter ceasing, the chorus of a sea song rang loud upon the night; greeted at its close by shouts of applause.

"Sing, sailor, sing!" cried a woman's voice, answered immediately by the song of another singer, her voice joining his; every one rousing the boister-

ous chorus of a sailor's song until each window seemed to shake and rattle to the slap of waves, and to the thunder of a wind across the sea.

*"Faintly gleams the North star
As it shines on our starboard bow,
We're homeward bound for Liverpool town
And our hearts are in it now.*

*We've crossed the line and the gulf stream
Been down by table bay,
We've rounded the Horn, and we're homeward bound,
And that is the sailor's way."*

A woman sang the chorus then, alone, her voice as a silver bell a-swing upon some sea-bound clipper's forecastle head, as the wave's song about that clipper's feet.

The parlor of the place was full of men and women. They were drinking together from a common fund. Early in the evening a sailor, passing his hat around, had taken a "tarpaulin muster," every one present putting in such coin as he might afford.

"Nicky, old son," said the sailor, rolling the money upon the shiny bar, "When that's gone, say so. We'll have another tarpaulin muster. The old *Silverwing* goes to sea on the morning tide."

Most of the crew of the *Silverwing* were there that night, as well as men from many other ships.

Two women, gathering the glasses as the song came to an end, took them to the bar; and, when they were again refilled, passed them about the company. Round the sides of the room were chairs and couches,

save where a door led to the bar, and another to the rooms above. Across a corner was the piano.

The glasses handed round, a sailor rising lifted his glass, crying,

"Here's to the old *Silverwing*—drink her down."

They drained their glasses; another crying then,

"Come on, *Silverwing*—give us a song!"

A sailor of the *Silverwing* arose, the assembly cheering him.

"Oh, where am I to sleep to-night?

says Abel Brown, the sailor,

Oh, where am I to sleep tonight?

says Abel Brown, the sailor."

He sang with his pipe in one hand; the other hand waving to the company.

As, amidst the loud laughter of all, he finished the song, a woman entered the room. She was tall. She wore a flaming red gown, ending well above her slender ankles. Her ankles were most shapely, as were her long white arms, bare almost to the shoulder. Her hair, black as a crow's wing, hung in jet curls about her pale oval face; her neck as the neck of one of those white sea birds which sailors, meeting as they near the shore after long voyaging, call "homeward pilots"—white, soft, full of grace, but warmer than a sea fowl's feathers. Her large dark eyes dazzled as gems in far forsaken deeps of some old mine. She wore no ring nor bracelet; her sole adornment her own most Valkyr beauty.

As the song ceased and the applause died away, she stepped to the center of the room.

"Where's Ear-ring?" she asked.

Before any one replied she added,

"I'm going to dance him down for those ear-rings."

Laughter and applause were loud.

"Where's Ear-ring?" they cried, one to another.

A sailor, looking in from the bar room, said,

"Ear-ring's down to the Shipmate's Joy."

Looking about the room the tall girl asked,

"Who gets him, eh? Who goes for Ear-ring?"

Her voice was as a wind, low at red sunset, above the opening lilac buds; most sweet; and yet a wind with spring's cold crystal in it.

Several sailors, rising, went out, returning in a few minutes with a new comer.

He was a big man, the biggest there; his shirt, open at the neck, showing a chest viking-like and hairy; his sleeves, rolled to the elbow, leaving bison muscles bare. He was clean shaven; his shirt and trousers of blue dungaree; his face sea-weather tanned; his eyes most bright, below large shaggy brows; his hair and eyebrows, coppery; his face almost expressionless; the man appearing as though his mind were quite elsewhere. Unconscious of the eyes upon him, he sought a place to sit.

"No, you don't," cried a girl. "Here's Vernie, and she's going to dance you down for those ear-rings."

The sailor looked about him.

From his ears hung silver ear-rings, large, and studded with black pearls; ear-rings of peculiar design, adding a sort of mystery to the man who wore them, as though ear-rings and wearer held a common secret.

The crow-wing girl stood watching him, her lips

half parted, her eyes shining, most gem-like and intense.

Seeing her, he looked enquiry; and, stepping up to him, she said,

“Say!—listen, sailor!—I want those ear-rings, see?”

He shrugged his shoulders.

As the sailor turned to go to a chair she laughed aloud. Never, till now, had she set eyes upon the ear-ring sailor, though hearing much of him, and of his strength upon the main-sail's bunt when gales were in the canvas; and of his great weight upon the hal-yards when winds came fair and ships made sail at sea. She had heard how he gloried, quietly, in his strength, no man his match.

As he sat down she called to him,

“You're scared a girl can dance you down, eh, sailor?”

Laughing, the men and women looked at him.

Ashore, after the fashion of his kind, he was a quiet man, appearing lost; a simple fellow with all save ships and women; knowing the former from truck to keelson; understanding their handling well. As for women, they amused him—as gray African monkeys, or the antics of a Madagascar cat amused him; being apt to put their heads upon his shoulder, whispering; to place their small arms about his neck, calling quietly from their eyes to him; to run small fingers up and down upon his great paws, as though to feel the bear-like power in them. In a manner they were not unlike to ships; in need of watching; not to be trusted too far. One could not say what they might next be up to.

His world was a world of ships and of women; for

he fared seaward with the lofty clippers—dainty packets with uplifted heels, the sea pearls scattered at their plunging feet. Ships he loved for their responsive loveliness, though he could not have said so; for he did not know that it was so. Women loved him for his strength—after a woman's manner, for though they love all weak things, motherly, yet they love best a strong man, loverly; contemptuous of cowards—though those also find ones to love them, there being love for all. But *men* came first. Then culture bred in cowards—as missionaries are ever followed by the vicious. We, by right of heritage, are all cave men; and women are for us, as we for them—the bear, man-strangled, dead at the dark cave's mouth.

The sailor of the ear-rings was the slave of the sea; slave to a cruel mistress; knowing not even that he was enslaved; unable to say why he must follow her. He was a man of the ports; come whence, and going whither, none might say.

The parlor of the Golden Eagle ringing with the laughter of the men and women gathered there, he sat down; the girl of the crow-wing hair coming to stand above him, looking down upon him, a smile, scornful, upon her half parted lips.

"Scared I'll win your ear-rings from you, eh?"

Then, understanding that she challenged him, he arose.

A man seated at the piano spoke to the girl.

"Where's Billy Dick? Fetch Billy."

Billy Dick entered the parlor, a little fellow, wizened as a toad; his squat face freckled, pimples on his chin, his crooky fingers all tobacco stained, his watery eyes red-rimmed, his thin hair sandy, his out-

standing ears as bat ears—transparent as sand scoured sea shells; all his skin yellow—a sallow fiddler fellow.

“Watcher want?” said he.

“Fetch yer fiddle, Billy,—fetch yer fiddle.”

Looking from the girl to the sailor of the silver ear-rings, Billy Dick left the room, returning in a moment, his fiddle under his arm. A woman pushing a stool to the center of the room for him, he sat down.

The girl of the crow hair, and the dungareed sailor of the ear-rings, stood before him, face to face, a few feet apart. The girl, her dark eyes alight with expectancy, gay with enquiring challenge, a smile upon her lips, looked up into the sailor’s face.

The sailor did not seem to see, or notice, her.

Taking her crimson gown between her fingers, she held it up to either side, the light from above falling, all a-sparkle, upon the flashing silver buckles on her little shoes.

Tossing her head to the sailor, she threw a foot forward; the fiddle beginning to play, her feet to jig; the sailor looking straight into her eyes, a hand on either hip, beginning to dance; neither girl nor sailor making the slightest effort, their feet as part of the fiddler’s tune. The company leaned forward on their seats to watch the dancers, a few of them standing.

A woman, young, with yellow hair, robed in a yellow gown, as though a golden thistle grew amidst ripe wheat’s pale amber, rising, came close to the dancers, standing between and facing them. She bent downwards upon one knee, her face upturned to the great seaman’s face above her, and laying one hand upon her bended knee, she beat her other palm upon that upturned palm with rhythmic sound and motion; each onlooker, as he or she sat watching, beginning,

unconsciously, also to beat the time with palm on palm, gently,—a low, and ever-increasing urge to the feet of the two dancers to fly a little faster. The bartender with men from the bar crowding to the parlor door, the room became ringed with eager faces, each face fixed upon a dancer's face; upon either the expressionless eyes of the ear-ringed sailor, or upon the expectant face of the crow-haired girl whose silver buckles flashed the light into a maze of brightness round her feet.

Tossing her curls, the girl cried,

"Billy, Billy, come to life!—I want them ear-rings."

Then Billy Dick, grunting, played the faster. The sailor's feet made no effort; his lithe body upright, quite without motion as he danced. Leaning far forward on his stool, his hands upon his knees, his face upon the fiddler's face, the man at the piano murmured constantly,

"Faster, Billy, faster."

The crimson robe of the dancing girl fluttered above her ankles. Tossing her curls from side to side, away from her face, smiling, she kept her eyes ever upon the eyes of the sailor.

His hands upon his hips, neither smiling nor frowning, with no sign that he so much as saw her, he stared into her eyes.

They danced; Billy Dick's fingers flying with the fiddle bow; beads of perspiration coming upon his toad-like, freckled face.

The yellow haired girl, kneeling, clapped her hands. Save for the voice of the man at the piano constantly bidding the fiddler fiddle faster, no voice was heard; the onlookers, their glasses held in all sorts of positions, staring at the dancers; wisps of smoke arising

from unpuffed pipes and cigarettes. Leaning in the doorway, an aged sailor puffed vigorously at his black pipe, blowing dense clouds down wrinkled nostrils, seeming to aim a jet of smoke at the figure of each of the dancers.

The girl, ceasing to smile, danced now with set face, her eyes half closed. Her head a little drooped, her lovely chin forward, she gazed into the sailor's eyes as a witch telling off the moments till her victim should be won; dancing with an abandonment, a mad daring, that became more and more a thing apart from herself, as though the spirit of the wizard-driven fiddle-bow were in her feet, taking entire possession of her.

The sailor danced as though the fiddle had nothing at all to do with it; as though that yellow thistle girl, with her white, beating hands were not there at all, her eager watchful face upon his own. Unseeingly he stared at the slender woman before him.

Billy Dick's face was wet; beads of sweat, breaking into trickles, dripping down across the freckles of his brow and face.

Arising, ceasing to beat the time, the thistle girl stood open-mouthed watching the dancers, the crimson gown of the crow-wing girl almost touching her yellow robe in its incessant flutterings. Drawing deep breaths, as though exhausted, she looked from the face of one to the face of the other, her bosom heaving beneath the softness of her wheaty robe.

The sailor made no sign of weariness.

The crow-girl, her head drooped yet a little lower, her lips slightly parted, a gleam of white teeth between them, her neck a bending lily stalk, danced as a water siren striving to lure a strange, indifferent

prey to her quiet cave—a cave of sun warmth, very tempting.

“Play, Billy, play,” cried the man at the piano.

Billy Dick was biting his underlip; frowning as the sweat beads flowed upon his face.

Suddenly, drooping his head over his fiddle, his arm dropped limp beside him. The dancers, their feet half lifted, waited to start again.

No one spoke.

Wiping his face, Billy Dick, looking up, muttered, “I’m done.”

Even as he spoke, the waiting company watchful about him, there crashed upon the silence of the night the deep tones of a ship’s iron bell.

Then, from the tiers of ships that lay, as captured sea ghosts, chained to the silent wharves along the riverside, came the beating of the bells.

The night-watchman aboard the *Silverwing* had struck eight bells at midnight to call the hands aboard; and from ship to ship echoed the voices of their iron bells—all ringing in salute to send a ship to sea. As suddenly as they had broken the silence they ceased their clamor and the night was still again—ghost ships peopled by red sparks of pipes of old night-watchmen, who waited for the day to come; old men dreaming of old days; of sailors lost at sea with their ships; old men awaiting the time of high tide and the blowing of the off-shore winds.

Billy Dick arose.

“I’m done,” said he, and tucking the fiddle under his arm, he went from the room.

The company, calling for a last drink before parting, lined along the bar talking of the dance and laughing. Some spoke of the homeward passage,

raising their glasses to the name *Silverwing*, wishing the clipper a good passage, and calling to her hands,

"Meet you off the Horn," and the men of the sea bound ship replying,

"Aye! or some other day. In Poplar or in Castle Gardens, maybe."

Names were called and healths drunk, glass clinking on glass as men, nodding one to another, parted company, going out to the night.

In the parlor the girl and the sailor stood facing each other, the girl breathing deeply, as half exhausted; the sailor, his great hands yet upon his hips, without a sign of weariness.

Straightening her shoulders, the girl gazed deep into his eyes.

She stepped close to him, and, her face almost against his great chest, laid a hand upon his arm,

"Sailor," she whispered, "you've got me.—I don't want your ear-rings any longer. *I want you.*"

THE BALLAD OF THE *IVANHOE*

“**W**HAT is she making?” asked the mate.
“She’s making her sixteen, sir.”
“One hundred days to the Golden Gate,”
Said the hard-case mate.
The *Ivanhoe* was running for the open sea.

“What is she making?” asked the skipper.
“She’s making her sixteen, sir,”
“Two more nights and we’ll lose the Dipper,”
Muttered her skipper;
And the *Ivanhoe* was whooping it southerly.

“What’s she makin’, bullies?” asked Chips.
“Sixteen knots on her course, lad.”
“She’ll whip them lubberly London ships,”
Grinned carpenter Chips—
And then the Pampero caught her under full sail!

“She’s lost one whole storm suit,” said Sails.
They fetched new from the locker
And dressed her from boom to spanker brails
For the Cape Horn gales—
And then old *Ivanhoe* ran southing toward the Horn.

“Seen no sun in a month,” growled Bose,
“A full Horn gale’s a-blowin’,
And all of her yards is jammed up close,
My Gawd! ’Ow it snows!”
Old *Ivanhoe* had been full four weeks off Stiff.

"Where's the skipper?" the froze mate said.
 "I haven't seen him of late."
 "He's overboard, and he's drowned and dead!"
 And shaking his head,
 "You'll have to sail her to 'Frisco," said the second.

"Wot was it crashed in the black night?"
 "'Er topmasts carried away!"
 "My word, but ain't it blowin' a fright?
 Oh, Gawd fer th' light!"
 And that was when she'd been six weeks off old Cape
 Stiff.

Six men lay dead. Calm came in spells.
 The second mate went crazy.
 Old *Ivanhoe* lifted to the swells
 Clanging both her bells;
 Her wreckage trailed astern amidst the Cape Horn
 bergs.

"What is she making?" asked the mate.
 "Just creeping at two knots, sir."
 "Three hundred days to the Golden Gate,"
 Grinned her hard-case mate—
 When a fair wind blew after eight weeks off Cape
 Stiff.

"Will we sail in to Vallapo
 For refittin'?" asked the hands.
 "No, sons! *Not by one hell of a show!*
 We will take her so,
 Just as she is, to 'Frisco," said her hard-case mate.

"A steamer's comin' through the swell,
Offerin' us assistance."

"Signal the lubber to go to hell!

Signal him, 'All's well,'"—

Old Ivanhoe had been two hundred days at sea.

"What's come of that old *Ivanhoe*?"

Asked one of the clerks at Lloyd's.

"Perished, maybe, in a Cape Horn blow,

There's none to know."

And then they slowly tolled the bell for her at Lloyd's.

Jury-rigged, with all her freight,

And the red rust on her sides,

Came old *Ivanhoe*, a twelvemonth late

With her hard-case mate,

And half her crew, slow stealing through the Golden
Gate.

A DEBT AT SEA

I

ATALL three-skysail clipper, a long, low-in-the-water four-mast barque, the old *Silberhorn* of Liverpool lay moored to the bollards beside the African dock, Antwerp; her sails aloft, her holds deep-laden, her sides bright with new paint—a fly-away packet ready for sea, on a June tide of the year '97.

In her half-deck sat three apprentices, eating the fare provided for such as they aboard tough clipper ships.

The half-deck was a tiny room; two bunks placed fore and aft, two more 'thwartships, with, in the angle between them, a little table beside which stood the sea-chests of the lads who dwelt there. There were three ports; two looking over the deck to the main shrouds, the other forward upon the main fife-rail; a small lamp, swung in gimbals, supplying light by night.

Paddy O'Brien, a lad of Irish breeding, with a touch of hobgoblin devilment in his carefree blood, a second voyager now starting upon his third voyage, sat at the end of the table; he was a bony boy, with fair hair and pale blue eyes, a thin, almost knife-like nose, sensitive nostrils and a small mouth; sitting silent—thinking of a girl who had bidden him farewell on Plymouth Hoe a day or two ago.

Opposite him sat the new chum, a soft-faced lad who had just joined the ship for his first voyage to sea; a

tall, green-looking youth with crow hair and blue eyes, high cheek-bones and little, close-set ears—a lad by nature shy, and now keeping quiet amongst strangers; anxious to learn their ways and to be one with them.

At the side of the table sat the oldest hand, Polly Thompson; the son of old Bijah-Bijah Thompson, skipper of the far-famed colony wool clipper *Thermopylæ*—now an aged man retired from the sea, dwelling ashore. It was Polly's second voyage with the *Silberhorn*, but his third to sea; for, before getting a touch for the West-Coast ships and transferring to the big barque, he had made a voyage with the full rigger *Patriarch*—a clipper of the same line as the *Thermopylæ*.

Polly was an unusual-looking lad; named after a Sydney barmaid by his old shipmates of the *Patriarch*, owing to her prettiness and to his peculiar ugliness—a case of contrasts such as one finds amongst knock-about lads. He was six feet two and a half in his big bare feet; loosely knit, with long, pendulous arms, and at the end of them a pair of monstrous hands—hands now famed for their unyielding grip upon bellying canvas, as well as for their power to beat the bunt down in a piping squall. His hair was black and long, his eyebrows all but meeting above his nose; his nose his most peculiar feature—very long and straight, and ending in a queer-looking sort of a blob; his lips inclined to heaviness, but shutting thin and scarce visible when things were going against him; his eyes pale gray, at times expressionless, at times again twinkling with rays of laughter—or, when his lips grew thin, setting cold and hard as shining points of steel.

They sat in silence, each dreaming his own peculiar

dreams; each munching with evident dislike the coarse food before him.

Suddenly the light was darkened; and, looking up, Polly saw framed in the port above him the face of a stranger, a large round face peering down upon the table; a face in which were set two large and very deep-blue eyes surmounted by a shock of yellow hair; a face whose cheeks were soft and pink—a smiling face with large and regular white teeth showing through parted lips.

“Alphonse,” said Polly, “come in and make yourself at home.”

“Hell, yes—don’t stand there blocking the light out,” said O’Brien.

The newcomer, entering, took a proffered seat; Polly, as he did so, shoving the hash-kid in front of him, bidding him help himself.

Alphonse, for such, since Polly had so named him, was henceforth to be his name, looked curiously into the hash-kid, puckering his brows. Sighing, he placed a hand within his jacket, and, drawing forth a long-necked bottle, put it on the table.

“Alphonse, my son, you give me a pain. Don’t you know that wine—jumping snakes!—it’s champagne, isn’t it?—is not allowed in a half-deck, eh?”

Polly, with a sidewise shove, removed the stranger from his seat, and sought within his sea-chest the wherewithal to open the bottle. He filled his pannikin and O’Brien’s, and together they drank the newcomer’s health; Alphonse standing beside them, bowing low, murmuring—

“Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure.”

Once more, placing a hand beneath his jacket, the

stranger, drawing forth a bottle placed it upon the table; and once more the claw-like fingers of the oldest hand embraced the bottle; holding it to the light, peering from dense brows up at the Belgian boy, remarking:—

“Port wine, eh, Alphonse? Say, son, are you a wine merchant?”

This time he filled the pannikin of Smith, the new chum, also, and again the stranger’s health was drunk.

Alphonse was wreathed in smiles; his blue eyes twinkling as a pair of twin mountain lakes at summer sunrise; his hands thrown out, palms uppermost.

“Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure,” said he.

With a deep bow he took himself off; stopping as he passed the open port to gaze once more upon them, murmuring—

“Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure.”

When he had gone, O’Brien, turning to Smith, asked—

“Queer fellow, was there some one here a while ago or did I dream it?”

Smith passed him a pannikin to smell, and sniffing it, he turned to Polly.

“What do you make of it, Polly?” he asked.

“Dunno—reckon it must have been a French missionary trying to get a footing. What else *could* it have been?”

That evening O’Brien, having a date with a Belgian girl, invited the others to accompany him ashore.

“She’s got two sisters,” he said, “and the old folks are *It*. They’ll be tickled to meet any friends of mine; c’mon.”

Returning aboard after midnight, Polly in the center,

and not only O'Brien's but Smith's arm also about his waist, and with his arms encircling them, they entered the half-deck—O'Brien lighting the murky lamp.

"Say, O'Brien, what is it?" cried Polly as, looking at the spare bunk, he observed what appeared to be a sleeper huddled under the blankets.

Withdrawing them, he bared the face of the stranger; the stranger as he did so waving an arm, smiling, sleepily remarking—

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure."

Shrugging his shoulders, Polly turned into his bunk, and, rolling out again with an exclamation of surprise, held high a long bottle.

"O'Brien, look around your pillow," he said; and O'Brien, doing so, withdrew a similar find.

Filling the pannikins, they once more wished the newcomer excellent health—Smith, holding a pannikin to the sleeper's lips, inviting him to drink with them; the newcomer sleepily opening his blue eyes, taking a sip from the pannikin, murmuring—

"Ze sheep, ze sailor—I dreenk 'eem," and, falling back again to continue his slumbers, muttering feebly—

"Eet ees ze charm."

II

It was a starry mid-June morning, with no sign of dawn yet streaking the sky when the tug came to take the tall clipper out to the stream; the shore lights glimmering along the wharves and riverside; a faint glow from the twinkling lights along the streets overhanging the town. Dropping anchor in mid-stream, she lay awhile awaiting the full flood-tide; the hands hurrying to the windlass as dawn began to show across the flat lands; the sky faintly gray, the

stars blinking above the still river, their reflections dancing on the muddy water.

Tom Swift, a squat fellow with a sand-paper face and bowed legs, narrow eyes and tobacco-stained lips, and a voice as the sigh of sea-winds far away, lifted a chantey; the windlass bars clanking, the feet of the hands stamping, the water lap-lapping along the clipper's sides; the stars seeming as if stooping to catch the lilt of the sailor's singing, while the crew roared the chorus:

*"Come all you young sailors that follow the sea,
an' away, Rosianna.*

*Come all you young sailors that follow the sea,
an' I've just come over the mountain.*

*And I'll tell of an incident happened to me,
an' away, Rosianna.*

*And I'll tell of an incident happened to me,
an' I've just come over the mountain."*

The refrain rolled away across the river, losing itself amongst high buildings ashore; wavering far up the dim streets of the city; awakening children, to cry to their mothers—

"Mother, who is it sings in the night?"

Mothers replying, soft-voiced, a-shudder at the cold sea's toil:

"Hush, dear—'tis a ship goes seaward. Her sailors are singing."

Tom's voice picked up a rollicking strain; his feet stamping to the lilt of his song, singing farewell to the poor folk ashore—dwellers of streets and dusty by-ways.

The high white clipper was upon their quarter, her topsails at the mast-heads, racing for the sea, sweeping down upon the long slow-sided gray and black painted barque; the hands running to and fro upon her decks singing the sheets home—shouting taunts to the slip-away old four-mast packet; the *Silberhorn* sending her topgallants away, swinging them to the mast-heads, walking them up, the bow-wash rippling all about her pretty pink forefoot—the full rigger coming down astern steadily; gaining nothing—the sea-god's spear outstretched, his golden trumpet blowing.

"How's your hands, Alphonse, my son?" asked Polly Thompson, meeting the lad with the yellow hair beside the half-deck door as they went below for dinner.

Alphonse stretched out his hands, palms uppermost; the fingers, the palms, the wrists even, blistered and raw.

"Ze charm—ha, ha," he laughed; a quizzical sort of laugh hiding dismay.

"You'll be all right, son—matter of weeks," said Polly, filling his mouth with a hunk of sea-bread. "O'Brien, are your hands sore?"

O'Brien held them out. No blisters there; hard hands with thick skin on palms and fingers.

Smith looked mournfully at his hands, red and raw; great broken blisters all over them.

"I vish I some vine 'ad—zen ze 'ands I forget," said Alphonse.

"No wine here, son; got to get the guts here, my lad," grinned Polly.

That night the watches were set—the first night out; the second mate, after the custom of ships, taking the

ship to sea. The mate would bring her home in days to come.

Alwyn, the second mate, was a large man, well over six feet; a red-headed fellow with immense raw bones and sunken, deep-brown eyes; a fellow with a stubby red beard to whom the apprentices, each and all, took a quick dislike—a dislike that he reciprocated. He was a Yorkshire-man, from Hull, with the gruff voice and blunt accent of the Geordies.

O'Brien and Alphonse went to the second mate's watch.

The second night out Egg Martin went to the skipper, talking with him of the work to be done in the coming days; the scouring and cleaning ship; the painting and the tarring down; and by and by the bending of the light sail aloft.

"I'd like to have you make that big apprentice third mate, sir. He seems to be a good boy," he said.

"He's only an apprentice—not out of his time yet; he'll draw no pay. It might be a good idea," replied the blue-nose skipper.

A trick of the clippers, that—giving a lad all the burden and none of the reward—thereby making hard sailormen for the taking of good ships safely through tight places in the years to come.

Next morning Egg Martin called Polly aside.

"You're to act third mate, Thompson," he said. "I'm going to leave all I can to you. Responsibility's a fine thing for a lad—gives him guts."

In less than five minutes after Egg Martin had spoken to him Polly was giving orders; the hands staring at him; a boy giving old sailors orders.

"Make it lively—on the hop!" said the son of old Bijah-Bijah Thompson of the colony wool clippers.

They made it on the hop, grinning amongst themselves, growling audibly at times, "to give 'im the guts."

"There's a rattlin' adrift in the main royal rigging, Polly," said O'Brien, meeting him on the main deck that evening.

"Pat, you'll put a 'sir' when you speak to me on deck, son: See?"

"I will like hell! You're only an apprentice."

"You'll put it there or I'll fix it so you will, Pat. Suit yourself. If you want to give the hands a bad example, it's up to you. Your fault when the fur starts flying! See?"

Pat O'Brien saw.

"By God! I guess you're right, Polly. I'm a stinker, sir."

Polly grinned, his brown eyes full of laughter. At dinner that day Alphonse, sitting in the half-deck, gave him the "sir."

"Cut that 'sir' stuff; we're not on deck, Alphonse, old son. I'm one of the gang in here."

The half-deck held together.

III

When the ship had been a few days at sea it came out that Alwyn, upon his last voyage, had been second mate of a small tramp, that, having been run down and cut in two by one of the Parrot liners, had gone to the bottom, leaving Alwyn struggling in the sea to be picked up with two others of the tramp's small crew—the only survivors.

The apprentices in the half-deck, smoking their pipes in the dog-watch, jested about it.

"Too bad he wasn't drowned—he's no account anyway," said O'Brien.

"I like not ze beeg secon' mate. I teenk e's 'fraid for ze cold vater—vot you say? Ze nerve? Ah, ze nerve! Zat ees eet. *Oui, oui*—ze nerve—ees not zere," said Alphonse.

Egg Martin, on the bridge one night, rubbing a hand through his hair, talking to himself, muttered:

"Hell! I was cut down on my first voyage; washed overboard the next; five days in an open boat off Stiff when the old Gulf Stream spilled over. Is my nerve busted? God! I think not!"

Alwyn, jealous of Polly, disliking the apprentices, made life as sorrowful as it lay in his power to do for Alphonse; doing his utmost to torment O'Brien, who, tough as a wire, kept a constant grin upon his lips no matter what blackness was in his heart.

Thirteen days out they overhauled the London ship *Rajore*; signaling her, asking her time out and whither she was bound. And the *Rajore* answered—

"Thirty-three days from Antwerp for Frisco."

Then the *Silberhorn* sent her message; and, disbelieving the barque's signal, the *Rajore* asked to have it repeated and got it again—

"*Silberhorn*, thirteen days, Antwerp to Portland."

They had seen no more of the *Tythonus* after losing her in the channel mists the first night out.

The crew were a mixed lot; some sailors, some merely flying-fish sailors gathered from the slums of North Sea ports and useless save for scrubbing and cleaning ship.

One night, after she had crossed the line and was standing southerly, the weather being dirty, Egg sent Polly to get the kites off her.

Upon the following morning the skipper, coming early on deck, told Alwyn to give her all sail again—the royals of a following ship being just visible over the rim of the sea astern. When the hands went to hoist the jib topsail the sail went aloft in ribbons—blown away as it was hauled down the previous night. The skipper was furious, shouting to Alwyn to know why the sail had not immediately been unbent and replaced. The blame—really at the door of the men who, furling it, had failed to report that it was carried away—was at Polly's door as he was officer in charge when it came in. The night had been a dark one, and none save the men who handled the canvas could have known that it had been ripped.

The skipper stamped savagely to and fro upon the poop, muttering to himself; staring forward at the hands bending a new sail.

Alwyn was delighted at Polly's discomfiture; making sneering remarks about third mates which the hands could overhear; the scum of the North Sea ports grinning, fawning upon him—refuse from the hang-outs of Spoor and Man-in-a-Boat Streets.

Polly, saying nothing, went about his business with thin lips: hearing what Alwyn said—waiting with the old patience that comes to young hounds of the old sea's hunting—biding his time.

Coming off the river Plate, the ship met dull weather; the sky overcast, the sea gray and rolling up in long uneasy swells that, lifting her forefoot high, left her to drop with booming crashes to the deep hollows beyond.

There came a night darker than the devil's coal-yard, when no man could see white canvas pressed against his face—a windless night with the gear of the

pitching clipper groaning and the wash lapping noisily about her. During the second dog-watch there came a blinding flash of lightning that illumined the whole sea—a limitless expanse of black waters overhung by tumbled curtains of thunder-cloud. Directly under the clipper's forefoot lay a ship; almost within a biscuit toss, but gliding away to leeward, her counter close below the boom-end of the *Silberhorn* as she passed away; her canvas furled—snugged down to lower top-sails, awaiting the tempest: her sides, her tapering masts and graceful spars, white painted and shining in the purple flare: an ancient sea-god below her slender boom, leaning above the dark sea, a golden trumpet to his lips as though blowing a call to hunters of the sea.

It was the *Tythonus*.

The blackness of the night was intensified, palpable, a thing to be felt with the bare hands—a solid wall forever enclosing ships upon a lost sea.

A cry rang along the deck of the four-master—

“All hands shorten sail.”

It was lost in a clap of thunder which, as if the pillars of heaven had broken from their foundations and were falling upon the sea, trembled the clipper from stern to stern.

The hands swarmed to the deck, making for hal-yards and downhauls, clew and bunt and leech lines, shouting on the unseen ropes: their voices joined to the groaning of the spars, to the soft rustle of the canvas in the night above.

Another flash of lightning illumining the sea, they saw the Bristol clipper drifting to starboard, the faces of her men peering from her railings into the immensity about them.

The echo of a sailor's laugh came over the water,

and the sharp creak of a block as they ran her fore-topmast staysail up. The catch of a chantey chorus rolled across the long swells:

*"Sure it's I'll be your true love if only you'll stay,
heave away—oh, my Johnnie.
Sure it's I'll be your true love if only you'll stay,
oh, Johnnie, my Johnnie."*

Thunder crashed again, making the clipper quiver. Fin Hansen's voice rang out upon the night, singing on a topgallant leech-line—

*"Ee-o-o-o-oh-oh-oh-ho-ho-ho-haul-away-oh, ee-ee-oh—
haul-away-oh!"*

Topgallants, royals and kites down, mainsail and cross-jack hauled up, the hands started aloft to furl sail; lightning playing incessantly about the ship, thunder pealing overhead.

In the main rigging, a hand on the shroud, stood Polly Thompson, third mate, waiting for the others to go aloft before him, that he might be in the bunt where the heaviest lifting was; raising the great storm mainsail to the spar.

Egg Martin walked the bridge looking away toward the *Tythonus*, a lost and fantom-like ship drifting down a Plutonian sea; no voice borne from any singing sailor's throat, no flap of sail, no whine of slowly rolling tackle-block.

Alwyn, white-faced, recalling the night when the Parrot liner left him struggling in the sea, hung back under the mizzen-shrouds waiting for the men to get aloft; meaning to remain upon the safe footing of

the deck—a man with his nerve broken; *a man who had never had the thing called nerve.*

Suddenly—as a peal of thunder died away and silence fell, broken only by the rustle of canvas aloft and the scraping of men's feet upon the rigging—there rang out upon the death-like and mysterious night a shriek—a shriek swift—followed by the bull-like voice of old Fin Hansen, roaring ere yet the falling sailor struck the dark sea's face—

“Man overboard!”

The lightning, flashing as he cried and as the echo of that wild cry of despair yet rang upon the stillness, showed a hurtling figure falling to the sea beside the scarce-moving vessel.

The night was filled with the loud cries of men, sliding down shrouds and backstays.

The voice of Egg Martin came from the night's void, steady and slow; the voice of an old dog of the cold sea's hunting.

The voice of Polly Thompson, son of old Bijah-Bijah of the wool clippers, rang out—young and defiant of the sea—

“Weather main brace—lay the yard aback—step lively—on the hop!”

The sound of running feet was heard, the hum of voices, the rattle of tackle-blocks, the whine of sheave-pins, as the yards swung round.

Somewhere from the darkness the voice of Alwyn spoke; a voice whose owner knew that were a boat cleared away his place would be with her unless the skipper called for volunteers only; a voice whose owner remembered the night when the tramp was cut down by a Parrot liner—

“Poor devil, he's gone to hell.”

The yards were back, and again the third mate's voice was heard.

"Clear away port quarter boat."

Alwyn's voice, low and clear on the night, spoke from somewhere close to Polly Thompson:

"Ye damn fool! Ye can't put a boat out to-night."

The voice of the blue-nose skipper came from the bridge, distinct and cold-cut; each man staying to harken to what his captain said.

"Volunteers only. If a boat goes, men—she may not come back."

The boat was dropping to the water, men leaping into her as she passed the rails—Tom Swift, Fin Hansen, old man Sinclair, the father of the fo'csle, and last of all young Pat O'Brien.

Brushing past Polly, he spoke—

"Hell! Polly—it's Alphonse."

"Get back to the deck," said Polly Thompson; and, staring at him, O'Brien leaped back to the deck; Bijah Thompson's son knowing full well that to-night was a night of gray hunting for the strongest dogs of the sea's old pack.

A foremast-hand took O'Brien's place; the third mate, an eager volunteer where his superiors hung back, leaping after him, dropping nimble-footed to the boat, crying as he fell:

"Give way, men. Make it lively."

The boat was gone, leaping to the lift of the high swells; her oarsmen swaying to and fro, to and fro, to and fro, back and forth, back and forth; the oars swinging with a ceaseless rhythm in perfect time together.

"Give way, lads; let her go," said Polly Thompson,

standing in the stern sheets, the yoke-ropes in his big hands.

Clank, clank—clank, clank—clank, clank—from the rowlocks and the long swing of the backs of the dogs of the gray sea's hunting-pack.

The ship was fading in the distance; illumined now and again by the flashes of the passing thunder-storm; the night about them black, the sea black, the world a void.

They sped on, over the ridges, over the long hollows, swinging ceaselessly to and fro, to and fro—hunters of the sea.

A flash of lightning came, terrific, appalling, insistent; lighting the world of sea and sky—showing, far off upon the horizon, a long, low wall of utter darkness arising from the rim of the sea.

In the rigging of the bark a lantern waved wildly, to and fro, up and down—signaling to the boat.

Above the clank of the rowlocks Polly Thompson's voice spoke—

“The ship is signaling to us to return, men.”

A face looked up, a row of faces—faces of the hunters of the sea—the eyes of old Fin Hansen, the stroke oarsman, looking straight into the eyes of the son of Bijah-Bijah Thompson.

From the ship the lantern waved frantically, to and fro, up and down, swinging in a red arc in the mizzen-rigging.

A smile, youthful, defiant, delighted, swept over the lips of the third mate of the clipper *Silberhorn*.

“Give way, lads. Let her have it.”

The lightning, fainter now as the thunder-clouds rolled away down the path of the approaching *pam-*

pero, showed a black band swiftly rising from the sea rim; overspreading sea and sky; obliterating all things.

From somewhere in the night a voice cried, and, hearing it, Polly shouted—

“Back water, men—lively!”

His hands to his lips, Polly shouted—again, and again. By the pale flare of a distant flash a face appeared beside the boat, an outstretched arm, a hand that, rising, grasped the gunwale. A form, wet and gasping, hove itself over the gunwale and lay prostrate in the stern sheets at the feet of Polly.

The tempest was sweeping toward them, darker and darker by the dying lightning flares. The boat leaped across the ridges, swung through the hollows toward the ship whence the lantern was wildly beckoning.

From the bottom of the boat a voice spoke, a voice with the ring of youth, with the growl of a young hound of the pack.

“Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure,” it said.

“Grab an oar, you little blighter, and lay back,” said old Bijah’s son.

Alphonse, dripping, still gasping for breath, grabbed an oar and lay back, swinging to the rhythm of the other rowers.

The storm, a river Plate *pampero*, sweeping from the vast pampas, was fast approaching; the sea hushed, as if expectant and waiting a mighty blow. The rain commenced to fall, drenching the rowers, hissing upon the sea.

A moment more and the boat swung under the side of the ship, men hurriedly hooking the falls; a voice from the rail counting slowly, tensely; faces beside the counter listening eagerly to each count—

"One, two, three, four, five, *six*—thank Gawd!"

A sigh of relief, a gasp, a long-drawn breath arose from the gathered sailors, as, seizing the boat-falls, they hauled her to her place upon the skids.

"Stand by topsail halyards! All hands keep handy."

The *pampero* smote upon her, from a bank of Plutonic night, with a deafening roar; sprays driving in sheets across her, the sea moaning, spars and masts and ropes creaking wildly for an instant till, tight in the fury of the tempest, each was rigid and voiceless.

As the *pampero* caught her Alwyn, reaching into the mizzen-rigging, took the lantern down; holding it up, opening its little door to blow it out. As he stood, his face beside the lantern, the first breath of the wind flickering its flame, he was aware of a man who, coming close up to him, peered a moment into his face and then with cool deliberation spat straight into his eyes.

The wind whipped the lantern flame out; Alwyn, steadying himself against the rail, staring at the dim shape of a receding figure, was unable to see who it had been.

Fin Hansen, the sewer of torn sails, had turned upon his heel and hastened away to the topsail-down-hauls.

IV

From the night when Alphonse went overboard Alwyn's dislike for him, as well as for Polly Thompson, was intensified. Whether he actually knew who it was that had spat in his face would be hard to say—whether indeed, at times, while thinking over the incident, he was but half certain that such a thing

had actually taken place might be questioned.

Fin Hansen, sitting day by day at his seat beside the main hatch, stitching away at the sails, kept his own counsel.

The night that Polly picked Alphonse up, the lad, coming to him in the half-deck, smiling up into his face, laying his hands upon Polly's shoulders said:

"Ah, ze so nice girl, zat Polly—you see! Zum day I make ze pay of ze debt."

Polly, laughing, replied:

"All right, Frenchy old son. A bottle of Moët and Chandon when she pulls into the African dock next, will about square things; eh?"

The *Silberhorn* made the run to Portland in a hundred and twelve days; and two weeks later, while she still lay at her moorings in the river awaiting a discharging-berth, the *Tythonus* glided to anchorage astern of her; rust-stained, her numbers fluttering lazily at her peak, even the sea-god beneath her boom appearing on that foggy morning as though aweary of the chill sea weather.

The river was full of ships from Europe—Hamburg, Genoa, Antwerp, Liverpool, London, Greenock—each in a hurry to discharge and to load for sea again.

To the red anger of the skipper of the *Silberhorn*, three days after the *Tythonus* came to port she towed into a discharging-berth, leaving the four-master lying idly at her river-moorings. But for all his wrath it was yet another five days before the *Silberhorn* went to a berth at the wharves, below the swinging bridge, the result of the delay being that the *Tythonus* was discharged, loaded and cleared for sea,

lying at the river-moorings again, while the barque was not yet ready for her outward cargo.

Owing to big wages ashore, as well as to the large number of ships in the stream, sailors were scarce along the Columbia; with the result that the *Tythonus*, cleared and ready for sea, was hung up at her moorings awaiting a full crew.

Along the Columbia there was but one sailor's boarding-master, Larry Sullivan; a cold-blooded robber, fast becoming wealthy by his deviltries amongst the sailors; owning a house in Astoria as well as one in Portland; keeping his two runners constantly busy at his dirty work of shanghaiing sailormen; wheeling them from their ships with tales of fancy money alongshore; selling them by ship-loads to sea-hungry skippers, impatient of delay, as soon as their ships were cleared for sea.

Twice, before the *Silberhorn* went to her berth, Pete Lazukos boarded her, stealing off to her by night to tempt her hands away. He came a third time accompanied by Tony Grant, confident of returning with a boat-load of deserting sailors.

As he climbed up the rope that hung over the ship's side, in the forerigging, Egg Martin, chancing to be forward and hearing his shoes scraping on the ship's side, peered over the rail. Quietly taking the rope off its pin, he let it drop. Lazukos, afraid of the water, screamed, his scream dying in a smothered gurgle as he disappeared in the dark river. Rising from the cold stream, scrambling into his boat cursing, he muttered of revenge.

"Shut your trap, you fool," said Tony Grant. "Why in hell don't you get wise and learn to swim, you poor rat, you?"

Crouching in the boat they listened, waiting to see if any one would appear at the railing; thinking that after all it might have been an accident caused by Lazukos taking hold of a loose rope.

As they crouched, Lazukos shivering, cursing under his breath, swearing to cut the liver out of every deep-water sailor that he could fill with doped drink from that night on, a head appeared over the rail; and as, thinking it to be a fo'csle hand ready to desert the ship and go ashore with them, they grinned up into the gloom above them, from which the head stood outlined against the shrouds, Egg Martin's voice spoke—

"Next time any of you fellows try to board this ship I'll fix you, see?"

In silence, cursing under their breath, they pulled ashore.

The following evening, Alphonse, strolling ashore with Pat O'Brien, passing the end of the warehouse, was aware of men talking in low tones in the shadows beside the board-walk. Alphonse had grown a cool head since the day he first came aboard the ship.

"Vait, Pat," he said. "Vait till I get out of ze wind. I vill be wiz you in a minute."

Stepping aside from the board-walk, he struck a match, holding it to his pipe.

"Ze damn vind," he muttered, and, stepping back to the board-walk, thrust his hands deep in his pockets and followed O'Brien.

He had seen what he looked for—two men who squatted, hidden under the side of the grain-shed. He had heard part of one sentence, in a broken tongue.

"Ze bigger ze better—zat ees how zey vish for ze *Tythonus*."

He had caught the sound of a soft, sneering laugh

that he had learned to know upon the sea-roads round the Horn to Oregon—the laugh of Alwyn.

The next evening Polly Thompson, meaning to take in a theater and to spend an evening by himself—a habit of his—took a stroll ashore. He was a lad who could be perfectly happy wandering around by himself.

Passing the Thetis Saloon, a place near to the end of Fourth Street, on his direct way up-town, a place where Larry Sullivan had one of his main hang-outs, owning the greater part of the business himself, he saw, as he turned the street corner, Alwyn leaning against the wall of the place, lighting his pipe—evidently ashore by himself; spending the evening in his chosen manner.

Polly, giving him a nod, would have passed on, but as he neared him, Alwyn, looking up and seeing a shipmate, spoke.

Alwyn, when he chose so to be, was possessed of a soft-spoken, friendly voice—the sort of voice to deceive any but an old hand amongst men. And now as Polly Thompson approached he made full use of all his Geordie suavity; speaking in soft Yorkshire accents, as if there had never been anything other than the best of good feeling between the two of them.

“ ‘Ove a drink wi’ me; will ’ee, lod? C’mon in, eh? Let’s you an me ’ove one together,” he said.

After a long voyage round the Horn, cooped up aboard ship, sailors coming ashore are given to forgetting all misunderstandings of the passage, remembering only the brotherhood of the sea, binding them in bonds of comradeship.

Polly, hearing the soft accents of the second mate, thought upon the instant that he had perhaps mis-

judged the fellow—misjudgments are easy enough. What evidence had he ever had that Alwyn had ever been anything but a good shipmate? What was a bit of rough horseplay? Why, nothing at all, of course! He, Polly Thompson, had been a stuck-up fool! And with a burst of friendship toward the man who though a coward was yet a shipmate, accepting the hand of friendship, he entered the Thetis at his side. Side by side they leaned upon the bar, watching the bartender getting their drinks—feuds and foolish quarrels of the hard old sea forgotten.

Pete Lazukos, grinning into Polly's eyes, placed two bottles on the bright shiny bar: Polly, trying to grin back at him, taking a queer feeling through his system at the light in the dago fellow's eyes; a suspicion, an intangible quiver of distrust creeping through his bones; making him look hard at the bottle before him; realizing that this was a hang-out of Sullivan the boarding-master's. He had heard the foremast hands, scraping the rust from the plates over her side, talking of the place that very day; jesting of men carried out from the place unconscious, doped—packed off to ships awaiting their crews.

"Dreenk 'eem oop—'ee's plenty more lak' 'eem," said Lazukos, leering at the face of the young third mate.

Polly looked at the bottle, and, realizing that one at least was safe, put it to his lips.

"Here's luck to you, Alwyn—a pleasant passage eastward; eh?" he said.

"Aye, m'lod, 'ere's look to 'ee—'ere's to as foine a bully roon east as ever 'ee seed, m'lod!" cried Alwyn; nodding to him, holding high the bottle; looking from

the far corner of his brown eye at the face of the dago fellow behind the bar.

Polly, drinking the ale, placed the bottle on the bar.

"Ze boy 'e feel ze glasses now? Ze boy stand ze dreencs now; eh?" smiled the dago; and Polly, knowing that it would but arouse suspicion for him to back down upon his plain due to the other, said:

"Yes—a couple more bottles; look alive. I'm in a hurry."

"Een hurry, eh? Ees not goot to be een hurry—ees better go slow—den maybe you get vare you start to go; eh?" said the dago, grinning at him.

Again Polly drank; imported liquor, plainly not tampered with.

"I lak you try thees, meester—thees fine dreenc for sailor, I tell you meester; see?" said Lazukos, placing a long black bottle upon the bar and filling glasses for the two men.

He filled a glass for himself.

"I dreenc on ze boss. Ze boss 'e no care, see? Ee's goot boss," he said, lifting his liquor.

Polly watched him; watching his slim fingers, watching his long sleeves, his wrists, his elbows, his snake-like eyes; listening to the slime that dripped from his tongue. Alwyn, nudging Polly, drew him aside.

"Say, see 'ere, sonny, me boy, zum day the boss'll get wise to that there yellow-belly an' kick 'im out o' the place; eh?" he said, holding Polly's eyes to his own.

Polly laughed; laughing naturally; reaching toward where he had left the tall glass of dark liquor; meeting for the smallest fraction of a second a thin finger withdrawing itself from the bar.

"Well, 'ere goes, shipmate! 'Ere's to a booly roon 'ome, eh?" said Alwyn, raising his glass, sipping at the dark contents, smiling at Polly, at the son of tough old captain Bijah-Bijah Thompson; remembering some one who, upon a dark night far at sea, had spat in his face; remembering that it had been a stooped man whose face he could not see; that it had been by a murky lantern's flicker as the flame blew out.

"Vy you no dreenk, meester? 'Ee's goot dreenk, I tell you—'ee's to make grow ze 'air on ze chest," laughed the dago fellow, tossing his liquor down, licking his lips; sweeping an arm along the bright bar; wiping the spilt drops of liquor from it; looking—inquiringly, Polly Thompson thought—at the face of Alwyn.

There was a sound at the door, a shutting away of the light, a creaking, and Polly, looking about, saw that two men had entered. One was a short squat negro, a thick-lipped muscular brute whom Polly had seen before—in a boat, he thought, a boat that came off to the ship as she lay at the river-moorings—pulling an oar, rowing Larry Sullivan himself aboard to speak to the skipper and the skipper telling them both to clear out.

The other was a sandy-haired, lean-faced, slouching fellow with fingers that appeared to cling; feet that appeared to glide rather than to walk across the floor; eyes that met no other man's eye; lips so thin as to be all but invisible; a narrow-headed man with scanty short hair; a toothpick stuck between his lips.

They were shutting the outside door—not the swinging doors to the barroom, but the heavy doors that were shut when the place was closed for the night.

Polly Thompson realized in a flash that he was trapped. The doors were shut; the iron cleats in place; the window-shutters closed.

"Vy you no dreenk? 'Ee's goot dreenk, I tell you, meester," said the voice of the dago at his side.

Polly stepped back—one swift long stride that brought his back against the wall; his large hand closing as he did so about the glass of liquor before him; his long arm drawn back, sending it with a swing straight at the face of Alwyn.

An instant and they were at him; the negro at his legs, wrenching to drag them from the wall; Alwyn, sure of revenge at last, springing with a cut and dripping face for Polly's throat—meeting a huge, hard fist that, stopping his mad rush, dropped him to one knee for a moment. Lazukos, vaulting the shiny bar, had gripped one arm, clinging to it like a leech.

Tony Grant had grasped the arm that had stopped Alwyn in his first rush. Polly feeling that his legs were about to go from under him, feeling the odds heavy, unable to strike, unable even to kick, struggling fiercely against impossible odds, saw a new face and heard a new voice speak above the noise of the struggle—the voice of Larry Sullivan himself, cold, hard, rasping:

"Knock him over the head. What in hell are you fooling this way for, eh?"

He saw the arm of Sullivan upraised, a heavy bottle in his hand, and, almost sensing the approach of the bottle as it flew toward his forehead, saw the head of Sullivan jerked swiftly backward.

The flying bottle, leaving Sullivan's hand as he reeled backward, missed its mark, striking Alwyn full upon the back of his head and sending him staggering

over the kneeling negro and lurching into Tony Grant, who let go Polly's right arm.

That right arm flew out, straight, unerring, strong, meeting the uplifted chin of Alwyn as, rising, he rushed again at Polly's throat. There was five months of patient waiting behind that blow; and Alwyn, reeling, dazed, senseless, fell in a crumpled heap upon the floor.

The negro, two ribs cracked from a swift kick well placed as he let go the third mate's legs under the weight of Alwyn falling over him, lay groaning and writhing, clawing at the unconscious form of the senseless second mate.

The fight was even. A laugh, short, ringing, deep, rang from the throat of Bijah Thompson's son as with one swing and another he drove the two runners driving against the bar, whimpering and crying for mercy.

Beside the bar stood a lad with a shock of yellow hair and large, shining, blue eyes who, unable to get tidings to any of his half-deck comrades had cheerfully sailed into any odds to pay his debt—if payment can be made with less than life for life saved from the night's dark and who now, a gun in his hand, complacently covered Larry Sullivan.

"A bit of harmless fun, boys—no harm done—just a little lark; eh?" cried Sullivan, stretching a hand to Alphonse, smiling to him; motioning the gun away; the gun staying, pointing directly at his face.

"Put it away, boy. We'll have the cops bothering us," he said, still smiling, still passing the whole thing off as he had many a time passed off a half-finished fight to his advantage, securing his victim by the slime upon his tongue.

"I'll trouble you for that bottle that Lazukos thinks so highly of," said Polly; adding—

"Get it—get it *on the hop*."

Sullivan got it, whimpering now and yet half-hoping that here perhaps was a loop-hole—that Polly was actually going to take a drink.

Polly Thompson drew out the cork, filling a glass with the dark liquor.

"Drink that—drink it *on the hop*. I've no time to waste," he said.

Sullivan, meeting the third mate's eye, the eye of old Bijah-Bijah Thompson's son, drank it, falling a moment later in a stupid heap upon the floor.

"Alphonse, we'll give 'em all a tot. Come along, old son—step lively," he said.

Together they went from one to the other of the gang, forcing their lips apart; forcing the dark liquor down their unwilling throats; leaving them lying senseless and stupefied, sprawled about the floor.

"Alphonse, how fast can you get to the ship and back, son? Go fetch O'Brien and Smith—on the hop; eh?"

"Aye, aye, sir. Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure," and Alphonse, yet speaking, was gone.

Taking them to the riverside, they loaded them into Larry Sullivan's boat; heaping them in one on top of another.

Polly Thompson took the yoke-ropes, the other three the oars; and away, under the crescent moon, to the mid-river moorings, they pulled their freight.

Coming under the side of the Bristol clipper, Polly Thompson hailed her; crying softly, not too anxious to awaken folk.

"*Tythonus, ahoy!*"

And while waiting an answer he whispered to his shipmates:

"Here's where the *Tythonus* gets some no-good foremast-hands. I think Mr. P. Thompson goes home with a provisional second mate's ticket, what? Who gets us our crew, I wonder? We don't want any things like these apologies for men."

A head appeared over the clipper's railing—the head of the nightwatchman.

"Go tell your mate Sullivan's runners are here with the rest of your crew," said Polly.

In a few moments another head appeared.

"Get those lubbers aboard. Hell, don't you have any more sense than to wake a fellow up?"

The head disappeared; footsteps receded along the deck.

Polly and Alphonse, swarming over the side, dropping nimble-footed to the clipper's crescent-lighted deck, tossed a rope's end to the other two.

One by one they hauled them aboard, dumping them on the deck, dragging them into the dark fo'csle, tumbling them into the spare bunks.

One by one, again they forced their lips apart; and once more gave them a shot from Pete Lazukos' favorite bottle.

Before dawn streaked the sky Polly Thompson, awaking in his bunk aboard the *Silberhorn*, listened to a chantey chorus echoing over the sleepy river—to the musical clank, clank, clank of a clipper's windlass paws—to the lap about the forefoot of a seaward-going ship.

Rolling over, burying his head under the blankets, he murmured to himself as he thought of the Belgian—

"Ze charm, ze charm—I azzure."

WANDERER

I WOULD walk a beach again,
A beach I used to know;
A little pier, where, wind or rain,
Blue Peter used to blow;
The pier where, at their moorings, lie
The lines of resting ships
Whose figureheads wait patiently,
With smiles upon their lips.

Your flowers I've known, your fields I've seen,
Or winter sere, or April green;
I've watched your seasons, hasting, flee;
Green May bud and leafless tree.

No bell need chime my passing hour,
Pluck no bloom from summer bower!
Great winds shall challenge, storm birds fly,
Bold Blue Peter flaunt the sky!

"Here's Bill come back!—How are you, mate?"
Boatswain nods his friendly pate;
The negro steward's eyes will shine
Twinkling welcome into mine;
The mate will cry, "Haul Peter down!
Man the windlass! Walk her round!"

I shall walk the beach again,
The beach I used to know,

The little pier, where, sun or rain,
Blue Peter used to blow ;
The pier where at their moorings lie
The lines of resting ships
Whose figureheads wait patiently,
With smiles upon their lips.

Ah, keep your flowers, your April hills,
Lilac, lily, daffodils :
Seas will thunder, ships will run
When the flowers of earth are done !

WAY FOR A SAILOR!

THERE was once a ship. Her name was the *Golden Age*. She flew, leaving them all astern of her. She beat into the wind. She ran down it. She glittered along it, throwing salt sprays to, and far above, the stiff bellied leeches of her great white upper topsails. With the wind before the beam she flung her tall topgallants wet—wet and shining with the white salt of the sea night two hundred feet beneath them. She seemed to laugh as she ran; seeming to sing, to ripple, as she flew, scattering sea beauties about her, gleaming as stars gleam when frosts are white along far inland meadows. *She was a ship.*

She carried a captain, a mate, a second mate, a boatswain, a carpenter, a steward and a cook, and, in her forrard forecastle, a company of hard driven, face-furrowed sailormen from the bright wide water ports. She carried also, in the little half-deck abaft her main-mast, a sea apprentice, a lad with pink cheeks, the down upon his face.

She left Port Costa wharf before the dawn upon a bitter February morning; chill mists hanging above the river, bluffs, and bay; a chill wind blowing seaward; thin rain falling, dripping from mast and spar and backstay.

"Stand by to take in the tow-boat's line," said the mate.

"Stand by to take in the tow-boat's line, it is, sir," said the hands.

"Stand by with the cork fenders, lest the wharf shall scar her sides," said the mate.

"Stand by with the cork fenders, it is, sir," said the hands.

From ashore, from behind a warped gateway, a woman waved a shawl, wondering why these men should leave *her* for the sea, and, seeing her, sailors upon the *Golden Age* smiled, breaking old furrows on their faces wide, their eyes a-glint.

"Stand by to drop the hook," said the mate. "We'll wait a while in the bay before we take her over the bar."

"Already, sir," said Chips, the carpenter.

"Let go," said the mate.

The anchor rattled down.

She lay as a swan awakening, waiting for the tide to take her to sea; the hands from twenty water ports sitting in her fore-castle, drinking coffee.

"They say she can sail," said one.

"They say she's a flyer," said another.

"We make fly," said a black man, from Suva.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed an old gray-bearded fellow, his nose in a tin pannikin.

"Where's she bound?" asked one.

"Queenstown for orders," answered another.

"The mate tol' me Liverpool direc'," said another.

"That's good! we'll dance when we get there," said another.

"We ain't there yet," said the old fellow with a gray beard.

"I 'aven't no oilskins. The crimp robbed me," said one.

"Nor 'aven't I no sea boots. The crimp robbed me too," said another.

"I've a couple o' poun's o' black baccy," said another.

"We make fly," said the Suva man.

"Yes! We'll make her fly!" said another.

"She'll fly anyway. She couldn't help it," said another.

"It's cold," said the pink-cheeked sea apprentice, sitting alone in the half-deck, sipping his coffee.

"Stand by to heave in," shouted the mate, adding to himself, "tide's at the flood."

"Stand by to heave in it is, sir," cried the hands, leaving pannikins strewn about an old wood table, hook-pots hooked to the table edge, rags in dark bunks.

A sailor was singing, twenty men bent over the windlass bars, a song of the sea echoing over the swirled tide; his voice, the voices of the twenty, mingled with the "clank, clank, clank," of the windlass pawls, "clank, clank, clank."

*"Oh, Santa Ana won the day,
away, Santa Ana,
Santa Ana won the day,
all along the plains of Mexico.*

*Oh, Santa Ana fought for fame,
Away, Santa Ana,
Santa Ana fought for fame,
all along the plains of Mexico."*

"Walk her down, sons,—walk her down!" cried the mate, looking over the fo'csle rail at the gurgle-black tide below her.

"Walk 'er down, the mate says. Come on, sons," cried the chantey-man.

*"Oh, Santa Ana gained his name,
away, Santa Ana,
Santa Ana gained his name,
all along the plains of Mexico."*

"Walk her down, walk her down," cried the mate.

"We make fly," said the black man from Suva.

"She'll fly anyway—she couldn't 'elp it," murmured another.

"All along the plains of Mexico."

"Let her have it. The wind's off-shore," cried the mate.

"Let 'er 'ave it, the mate says," shouted a sailor.
"Wispy, giv' us *Rovin'*."

"I'm wid you," said old Wispy Cavendish, "'ere you are."

*"One night I crept from my abode,
Mark well what I do say,—
One night I crept from my abode
To meet this maiden down the road,
We'll go no more a-roving with you fair maid!
A-roving, a-roving,
Oh, roving's been my ruin!
We'll go no more a-roving with you fair
maid!"*

"Admiral, gi' us a chantey," cried one.

"Aye, that's it! Gi' us a chantey, admiral," cried another.

"Sing, admiral, sing!" said Wispy Cavendish.

"Walk her up, sons," cried the mate, "the wind's off-shore."

The sea-apprentice, pink-cheeked, the down upon his face, looking out to sea, bright eyed, mist in his hair, sang,

*"Call all hands to man the capstan,
See the cables are all clear:
For to-day we'll weigh the anchor,
And for distant shores we'll steer,
Rolling home, rolling home,
Rolling home across the sea,"*

They gathered it up, shouting it, roaring it, men of the water ports, taking the *Golden Age* across the bar.

*"Rolling home, rolling home,
Rolling home across the sea."*

"Loose the main topsail," shouted the mate. "Run that anchor to the hawse pipe, now—run her up!"

They ran, stamping round and round the windlass.

"Look alive aloft there! shake that tops'l loose," shouted the mate.

"Sheet home main tops'l," bellowed a sailor from aloft.

"Get up there. Loose that upper tops'l," shouted the mate.

The skipper, on his bridge, blew his whistle.

"Get sail on her, sir. Loose all! Crowd her to it," he called to his mate.

"Th' ol' man says to crowd 'er to it," said one.

They stood, waiting at the halyards, the morning

breaking full across the sea; drizzle falling, dripping from mast and spar and back-stay.

"It's colder'n 'ell," said one.

"I got a couple o' poun's o' black baccy. 'Ere y'are," said another.

"'Ow many knots kin she make?" asked one.

"All clear main upper tops'l," shouted the man from Suva, from the yard above them.

"Hoist away," shouted the mate.

"Hoist away," shouted twenty sailors; taking the wet rope in their hands.

"We make fly," said the Suva man, sliding down the rigging to the deck, seizing the halyards.

"Some one gi' us *Boney!*" cried one.

"Aye! gi' us *Boney!*" cried another.

"Come on," said Wispy Cavendish, "'ere you are,"

*"Oh, Boney was a warrior,
to me way, hay, yoh!"*

*Oh, Boney was a warrior,
an' a long time ago.*

*An' Boneyparte met Wellington,
to me way, hay, yoh!"*

*An' Boneyparte met Wellington,
an' a long time ago."*

"I 'ope 'ee drives 'er," said one.

"She'll fly anyway. She couldn't 'elp it," said another.

"Hoist that main topgallant," shouted the mate.

"Main topgallant, the mate says," cried one.

"Hop along there, hop along," cried another.

"Give us a bit of them halyards," cried another.

"Me too! Gimme a bit o' that there rope," cried another.

"Sing!" cried one.

"Aye, that's it! Sing!" cried another.

"Wispy, giv' us a chantey," cried another.

"'Ere you are, sons," said Wispy Cavendish.

*"Oh, I say ol' man your horse will die,
and I say so, and I hope so,*

*Oh, I say ol' man your horse will die,
you po-o-o-ore old man!*

*Oh, if he dies I will jump upon his grave,
and I say so, and I hope so,*

*Oh, if he dies I will jump upon his grave,
you po-o-o-ore old man!"*

"Belay those halyards! what y' tryin' to do? Carry 'em away?" cried the mate.

"'Ee says to belay them halyards, ha, ha, ha," laughed an old fellow with a gray beard.

"We make fly," said the Suva man.

"Look out, sons,—she's goin' to ship it green. Duck y'r 'eads," cried one.

"Let 'er rip!" cried another.

"Don't she lift to 'em nice?" said one.

"She's a *sea boat*," said another.

"'Ere she comes again—watch out!" cried another.

"Hoist that mizen topgallant—never mind a drop of water," cried the mate.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed twenty men, "the mate says to never mind a drop o' water."

"All clear mizen 'gallant," bellowed a man from aloft, "*hoist away!*"

"Giv' us a bit o' them 'alyards. Me feet is cold. I ain't got no sea boots," said Wispy.

"I got two poun' o' black baccy," said another.

"Hoist away there," shouted the mate.

"Come on, sing!" cried a sailor.

"'Ere you are, lads," said Wispy Cavendish,

*"W'en I was young an' in my prime,
oh, roll the cotton down!"*

*W'en I was young an' in my prime,
oh, roll the cotton down!"*

*On the 'Golden Age' I served my time,
oh, roll the cotton down!"*

*On the 'Golden Age' I served my time,
oh, roll the cotton down!"*

"'Ark at Wispy—'ee's a-makin' of it as 'ee goes," said one.

"Belay those halyards! What y' tryin' to do with her?" cried the mate.

"We wants to make her fly," said one.

"She'll fly anyway. She couldn't help it," said the mate.

"Walk those royals to the mast heads! Walk 'em up! Let's get her out and going," cried the mate, the shore line fading as the day broke wide.

"W'ere's that there admiral?" cried a sailor.

"Aye! where's th' admiral?" cried another. "Admiral, sing for us, son!"

"Sing, admiral," cried another.

"Let 'er 'ave it, admiral, my little hearty," said old Wispy Cavendish.

"We make fly," murmured the Suva man, looking

at the pink-cheeked sea apprentice, with the down upon his face.

*"John Brown's wife drinks whiskey in her tea,
John Brown's wife drinks whiskey in her tea,
John Brown's wife drinks whiskey in her tea,
As we go rolling home,*

*Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
as we go rolling home!"*

sang the sea apprentice, twenty sailors lifting it, stamping forty feet along her dancing teak wood decks.

"Belay them halyards! What y' tryin' to do with her?" yelled the mate.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed a sailor, "th' admiral's tryin' to make 'er fly."

"She'll fly anyway. She's got to—*she can't help it*," said the skipper, on his bridge, overhearing them.

"Get all sail set on her. Set those staysails," shouted the skipper from his bridge, adding, to himself, "Crowd her along. She wants to go."

The *Golden Age* buried her bow to the smother, lifting her bright foot high to the sea ridges, laughing along with a drench of sea upon her long white decks.

"Admiral, it's eight bells. It's your wheel, my little hearty," said Wispy Cavendish.

"I'll make her fly," murmured the apprentice.

"South," said the man at the wheel, turning the wheel over to him; adding, "South—to the Horn, son."

"South it is," said the apprentice, staring into the

compass, giving her half a spoke of weather helm, the wind coming up from east by south.

"She's going to fly," said he.

"What's the course?" asked Wispy Cavendish, thirty days later, taking the wheel over from the Suva man, the clipper running down her easting for old cape Stiff.

"Sou' east by east," said the Suva man, "make fly."

The wind cried out of the westerly, the sea racing along her slender quarters, broken ridges angry all about her.

"It's blowing, sir," said the mate, looking at the skysail on the mizen.

"Let it blow," said the skipper.

"She'll fly anyway," muttered an old sailor, on the quarterdeck beneath them.

At dusk the second mate, taking the bridge, stared along the swamped decks, deep in green water from forecastle to poop, the ports lashed wide open, the sky dark.

"It's blowing, sir," said he, looking at the skysail on the mizen.

"Let it blow," said the mate.

The skipper looked out of the chart house; watching the canvas on the bending topgallantmasts.

"Take nothing off her, sir," said he.

"Very good, sir," said the second mate, adding, as the skipper went below.

"If he can drive her, so can I! She's going to fly."

Night fell; the sky black above the *Golden Age*, flying, with everything set, down the easting to old cape Stiff, the wash of an invisible sea noisy about her.

In the fo'csle the watch below sat at their supper.

"Pass that there skilly pot. Is it hot?" said one.

"It's cold. It got cold coming forrard from the galley," said another.

"Ain't there no hot skilly? Me feet is cold—I ain't got no sea boots," said Wispy Cavendish.

"I'm nigh froze; soaked to the bone," said another.

"Give us a bit o' hard tack out o' the bread barge; let's have something to bite on," said another.

"'As anybody got a dollop o' margarine left?" asked another.

"There ain't nuthin' left, and there won't be no more o' nuthin' served out till Monday night, what well you knows. What good's growlin'?" said one.

"Who's growlin'? I ain't growled! What ye talkin' about?" asked the other.

"These 'ere Mac Tosh ships is a 'ard lot," said one.

"They was, you mean. She's the last on 'em," said another.

"It's the owner's fault. 'Tain't the skipper," said another.

"It's comin' cold," said another.

"'Arris," said Wispy Cavendish. "Get out that concertina, and give us a bit o' music."

"Aye! Go fetch that little admiral, too. Get 'im to sing for us—'ee's a little brass bound singin' admiral, 'ee is," said another.

"That's what he is. Them apprentices is queer little ducks, isn't they?" said another.

In the half-deck sat the apprentice, eating a piece of hard tack, drinking cold coffee, without sugar or milk.

"She's taking water—hark at that!" he muttered.

The door banged upon from without, a man entered,

peering from under a wet yellow sou'wester at the apprentice.

"Admiral, we wants you to come an' sing fer us."

The apprentice rose, grinning.

"Cold as hell, isn't it?" said he, putting soul and body lashings on his wrists and ankles and holding his wrists out to the sailor.

"Lash them for me. My fingers are frozen. My coffee's cold," said he.

They banged the door behind them, battling along the swamped deck.

"D'ye reckon the old man's going to carry those skysails all night?" asked the sailor. "She'll lose her sticks, won't she?"

"Let her lose 'em. We've got a carpenter and we've got extra sticks," said the admiral.

"There's three full suits of extra sail in the sail locker, ain't there?" shouted the sailor, waist deep in the sea.

"Three full suits—let her fly!" shouted the apprentice.

"Hello, admiral! 'ow's she comin'? Come on an' sing for us," said a sailor.

They made him welcome, peering up at him through rings of tobacco smoke, from eyes half shut; the sea roaring without; the ship a-tremble throughout her length; the night black.

The skipper, coming to the chart house, looked at the barometer and standing beside the wheel watched the compass; the helmsman fighting the clipper, holding her true.

"Call all hands on deck. Shorten sail," said the skipper to the mate. "She'll lose a stick. We'll have to ease her."

"All hands on deck!" bellowed the mate.

"All hands on deck!" bellowed the watch.

"All hands, sons," roared a man through a fo'csle port, stopping the song.

They piled out, on to the back night-hidden decks, seas washing over the railings, sheets of water on the crying air.

"Clue the skysails up!" shouted the mate.

"Clue up the royals!" shouted the second mate.

"Down royal and topgallant staysails!" bellowed the mate.

"Down jib topsail, and jigger topmast staysail!" roared the bosun.

Men ran from rope to rope, their voices mingled with the wind wail, the crash of canvas in the night above as the flap of great bird wings.

"Aloft an' furl them—step lively!" shouted the mate.

"Lay aloft—get 'em furled!" shouted the second.

"Aloft,—aloft,—come on, sons!" bellowed the bosun.

Silent they swarmed aloft, sprays striking them in the lower rigging, hurrying to rocking spars high in the night.

"The wind's freshening," said the skipper on the bridge.

"She's a free-foot ship," said the mate.

"She'd fly if you tied her down," said the second, "she couldn't help it."

Aloft in the darkness the watches gathered up the skysails, the royals and the fore and afters, rolling them tight, neater than window blinds in rich lady's houses, snugging them down.

"Stow 'em snug!" cried the bosun.

"'Ello, me little admiral! is that you?—Stow 'em snug. They'll blow out o' the gaskets if you don't," said a sailor on the mizen.

"Can't see nuthin'. Black as crows, ain't it?" said one, passing a gasket.

"Black as Tess O'Leary's hair," said another.

"Black as the old devil what shovels hell's coals," said another.

"She fly," said the Suva man, aloft on the fore.

"She's a rip-snorter," said old Wispy Cavendish, at the end of the flying boom, snugging down the jib tops'l.

They came from aloft, leaping from the rigging to water swept decks, feeling their accustomed way with sure feet, and, eight bells striking, mustered upon the quarterdeck for the relieving of the wheel and lookout.

"All aft, sir!" cried Wispy Cavendish, knee-deep in the sea, growling as old dogs growl when gypsies go prowling.

"Relieve the wheel and look-out. Keep handy the watch," said the mate.

They went forrard, to the fo'csle, making short dashes, escaping the sprays under the shelter of the weather railing.

"Wind's freshenin'," said one.

"Let 'er freshen," said another.

"There's a Horn gale comin'," said another.

"She's bound east. She'll fly to it," said another.

"Chips," said Wispy Cavendish at the carpenter's door, "'ave you a bit o' burlap? I ain't got no sea boots. The crimp robbed me."

"'Ere you are. Roll 'em tight an' keep out the cold, Limbertoes," said Chips.

"Thankee. I'll do the like for you another day," said Wispy going forrard to the fo'csle, to make his Prince Alberts—winding the burlap tight about his old legs and bare feet, to keep out the Horn cold—his next turn at the wheel.

"Look at Wispy! 'Ee's all dressed up in Prince Alberts," said one, "the crimp robbed 'im."

The clipper raced beneath her topgallantsails, dipping deep as the wind arose and the sea ran higher.

The watch below rolled into their bunks, onto "donkey-breakfast" straw mattresses to dream of lights by many water fronts; of songs in strange places; of children who stared at them from door steps.

The watch on deck, smoking time-blackened pipes, sat in the fo'csle; hearing the wind's uproar, the sea's song without.

"It's coming cold, sir," said the mate to the skipper, on the bridge.

"There's ice about," said the skipper.

The mate said nothing.

"I'd hate to take a topgallant off," said the skipper. "She wants to fly."

The mate said nothing.

"I'd like to drive her," said the skipper, going below and staying a moment in the chart house door.

"If he can drive her," said the mate, "*so can I.*"

She flew, wind-staggered, down the night—*with ice about.*

Four bells went.

"W'ot's the course?" asked Wispy Cavendish, taking the wheel over.

"Sou' eas' by eas'," said the helmsman.

"Sou' eas' by eas', it is," said Wispy.

" 'Ow's your feet? Ain't they colder'n hell wi'out sea boots?" asked the helmsman.

"I'm all dressed up in Prince Alberts," said Wispy.

"Sou' eas' by eas', sir," said the helmsman, reporting to the mate upon the bridge.

"South east by east," said the mate adding, "Tell the watch to keep handy."

"Keep handy the watch," said the helmsman, entering the murky fo'csle.

"We're all 'andy," said one.

"An' colder'n hell," said another.

"What y' growlin' about?" said another.

"Who's growlin'?" growled the other.

"Was you ever in a Fernie ship?" asked one.

"I was in th' ol' *Silberhorn*," answered another.

"*Gawd!* was you?" cried another.

"Th' ol' *Silberhorn*," repeated another reminiscently, "one o' De Wolfe's."

"Gone ain't she?" asked one.

"Wi' all 'ands," said the other.

"She could fly," said another.

"Ol' Wispy's all dressed up in Prince Alberts," said another.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed an old gray-bearded man, "ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed all of them, staring at one another through the smoke.

"*All hands on deck—shorten sail!*" bellowed the mate, his head at the fo'csle door, "call the watch."

"Rouse her out there! rise and shine, you sleepers!" yelled a man at the door of the starboard fo'csle, waking the second mate's watch.

"Who's that a' singin' on them ropes?" muttered a

man of the second mate's watch, wriggling into cold oilskins.

"That's th' admiral," said one.

"Let 'im sing! I likes to 'ear 'im," said another.

"Step lively, sons! get her shortened down—there's ice about," shouted the second mate.

"Ice about," mumbled one, biting a chew of black baccy.

"Ice,—bergs—*hell!*" said another, reminiscently.

"Sing, admiral, sing," shouted another, stepping to the deck.

"It's six bells. Sing admiral! It'll soon be eight bells an' we won't 'ave to go below again till four o' the mornin'," cried another.

"We've 'ad two whole hours' sleep—that's enough for any sailor," cried another.

"Aye—enough for any dog," cried another.

"Haw, haw, haw!" laughed some one, in the darkness.

"Sing, admiral, sing," cried some one, in the darkness.

"Hi-leeee-yo-ho-ho,—hi—leeee-yo-ho-ho, haul away-ay-ay—oh," sang the singing apprentice, waist deep in the sea.

"Hi-leeee-yo-ho-ho,—hi—leeee-yo-ho-ho, haul away-ay-ay—oh."

"Aloft an' make 'em fast," shouted the mate, "hop along!"

Save for the wash of the sea, and the wind wail, the night was silent.

"How's she heading?" asked the skipper, of Wispy, at the wheel.

"Sou' eas' by eas', sir."

"Bring her to east south east," said the skipper.

"Eas' sou' eas', it is, sir."

"There's ice about," said the skipper to himself.
"I must keep her up a bit."

"Haul in the weather braces, sir, as soon as those 'gallants are furled," said the skipper to the mate upon the bridge.

"Aye, aye, sir," said the mate, descending to the deck.

"Starboard cross-jack brace," shouted the mate.

"Starboard cross-jack brace," shouted twenty sailors, in the hidden deeps of night.

"I want to drive her. I hate to take those 'gallants off," said the skipper to himself, looking at the Horn chart, outstretched upon the chart house table.

"Here's a hell of a squall," cried a sailor.

"Stand by all hands," bellowed the mate.

"Take that cross-jack off her," shouted the skipper.

"Hi-leeee—yo—ho—ho,—hi—leeee—yo—ho—ho," sang the apprentice.

They went aloft to furl the cross-jack, and descending furled the main-sail—the great storm main-sail: a hundred and two feet across the head, forty-seven and a half feet deep in the leech,—storm canvas, soaked with sea water, and frozen stiff.

Their voices echoed in the limitless night, singing a chantey on the main yard.

"And that's the way we'll pay Daddy Doyle for his boots," they sang, roaring it, screaming it, bellowing it; their bare hands cold and raw.

"I ain't got no boots. I wish I did 'ave," said Wispy at the wheel.

"*She's got a crew*," said the skipper, to the mate upon the bridge.

The mate said nothing.

"Reef the fore-sail," said the skipper, "the wind's freshening."

They reefed the fore-sail, the clipper driving through the black smother: trembling throughout her length.

"Six topsails, and a reefed fore-sail. I *hate* to take another rag off her. I want her to fly," said the skipper, looking at the Horn chart.

"Cold, ain't it?" said the second to the mate, upon the bridge.

"Ice about. Feel it?" said the mate.

"Aye—colder'n Satan's lost ice box," said the second, beating his arms.

Eight bells went, clanging faintly along the deck, the hands mustering aft in the dark, shouting to one another; somebody singing:

"Now all young sailors take my tip!"

"All aft, sir!" shouted a sailor, from the mizen shrouds.

"I'll go see what the skipper says," said the mate. "The wind's blowing up."

"A Horn gale coming," said the second, banging his bare hands upon his sides.

The mate looked in through the chart house door, a squall striking her, lifting her high, rushing her forward with a sudden jerk.

The skipper looked up.

"Freshening?"

The mate nodded.

The skipper stepped to the bridge.

"All aft, sir," shouted a sailor, waiting to go below.

"Me feet is cold," said Wispy, at the wheel. "I 'opes we get below. Mebbe me bunk'll be warm."

"Take that fore-sail off her," said the skipper.

"Haul the fore-sail up," shouted the mate.

"*Gawd!*" said a sailor, on the quarterdeck.

"Haw, haw, haw," laughed another.

"Who wouldn't sell a farm an' go to sea?" said another.

"Haul her up, sons, haul her up!" shouted the bosun.

"Hi—leee—yo—ho—ho,—hi—leeee—yo—ho—ho."

"'Ark to th' admiral! ain't 'ee the little singer?" said the bosun, easing away the fore sheet.

"Come on, sons,—aloft and make her fast," shouted the second.

"Come on, sons,—sailors to windward! farmers to leeward!" shouted the bosun.

"That's the way we'll pay Daddy Doyle for his *boots*," sang twenty sailors on the jumping fore yard, in the middle of the night.

"It's going to blow," said the skipper to himself.

"It's going to blow," said the mate to himself.

"It's going to blow the headlights off of hell's front door," said a sailor in the fore rigging.

"We make fly," yelled the black man from Suva, standing on the fore yard, staring into nothingness, spray striking on him.

"She'd fly anyway. She couldn't help it," said the apprentice to himself.

"Hi—leeee—ho—yo—ho, hi—leeee—yo—ho—ho," he sang, all about nothing, on his way down from aloft.

"Haw, haw, haw," laughed an old gray-bearded man.

"I wonder will we go below *now*," said one.

"I'll bet we take that fore upper tops'l off her," said another.

They did.

They *reefed* three upper tops'ls, one after the other; and coming once again to deck, to go below, they went aloft; and, one after the other, they *furled* three upper tops'ls.

Snorting through the hidden smother of the black Horn she flew, unseen bergs about her, ice freezing upon shroud and backstay, snow, in driven flurries, circling her high mast heads.

At five o'clock, two bells, they went below; the second mate's watch to roll, as they were, into their bunks; the mate's watch, on deck now throughout the night, to sip their coffee.

"It's going to blow," said one.

"She's boun' for Liverpool direc'—I wish she was there," said another.

"Liverpool direct. We'll dance w'en we gets there," said another.

"We ain't there yet," said the old gray-bearded man.

"We make fly," said the Suva man.

"You'd oughter been a bleedin' albatross: you wants to be flyin' so," said another.

"A crow black albatross! wouldn't that look queer, now?" asked one.

"I seen a cape pigeon wi' a w'ite 'ead once," said another.

"I seen a w'ite Mother Carey's chicken once, off Flattery," said another.

"Mother Carey's chickens—that's wot *we* be," said another.

"Gi' us a pipe full o' baccy," said another.

"Aye! let's 'ave a bit o' cheer," said another

"W'oo's w'heel is it?" asked another. "W'ere's ol' Wispy Cavendish? It ain't 'is w'heel *now*. It was 'is *last* w'heel."

"My Gawd!" shouted another, springing up, throwing his pipe into a bunk, "it's *my* wheel! I forgot. *I was so bleedin' cold.*"

"Ol' Wispy's been at the wheel since,—*Gawd!*—since four bells o' the first watch. That's—that's—" said one.

"We make fly," said the Suva man, grinning.

"*Fly?—Hell!*—Wispy's bin a' makin' 'er fly since four bells o' the first watch. That's—that's—" said another.

"That's seven hours an' over," said another, "Good Gawd!"

"'Ee is a bleedin' albatross—that's what Wispy is," said one.

"'Eee is all dressed up in Prince Alberts," said another.

A man arose from his sea chest, his pipe in one hand, his other hand outstretched toward them, his eyes starry beneath his yellow sou'wester brim.

"*Wispy Cavendish is a sailor,*" said he.

"*That's what Wispy is,*" said another.

The door opened, slowly, a man entering, stumbling over the high sill; his face drawn, his teeth tight set, his lips apart, his eyes half closed, his body swaying a little.

They stared at him.

He closed the door behind him.

"Some one gi' us a pipe full o' baccy," said he, "me feet is cold."

Day broke cold above the racing clipper; tossed seas about her, green water mountains rolling up astern, her length lost, her height lost; her strength, her swiftness, blown fragments on the storm; the sky low-hung above her slender skysailmasts, threatening and black, tormented and tormenting; the horizon close hurled upon her, in tortured swells white crested and ominous.

"A berg to starboard, a berg to port. She has passed bergs in the night—many of them," said the skipper, on the bridge.

"We're abeam of the Diego Ramirez," said he, looking at the chart upon the chart house table; a squall striking her; hail, crashing upon masts, and spars, and hatches, beating the sea to thunderous gloom.

Upon either beam bergs rolled and rumbled, broken ice astream of them crashing at their feet.

"The wind's going to come out of the easterly. It'll meet the current and the bergs. It'll be awful," said the skipper, looking out of the chart house door, shaking his head.

"If I head her northerly I must cross their path. If I stay astream of them it will prolong the peril," thought the skipper, watching lashed waters break high upon the towered bergs; listening to the thunder of the crashing fragments at their ponderous feet.

The skipper blew his whistle, calling the mate to the chart house.

"I'm going to head her northerly. One fast day's sailing will take her out of the ice region. The wind is beginning to haul south, and will come easterly, I think. Check in the starboard braces, sir."

"Starboard cross-jack brace," shouted the mate, the

watch crowding from the fo'csle to the drenched decks.

Steadily the wind shifted from sou'westerly to south, and, through south to easterly; the gale driving against the opposing current, the sea becoming each hour more savage, more madly tormented.

Eight bells was struck; all hands, gathered about the slopped fore-deck, gazing at a berg close down on the lee bow; the mate's watch starting to go below, to rest at length, after a full night's duty.

"Clue up the fore lower topsail," said the skipper. "It's going to blow."

"Fore lower tops'l up," shouted the mate.

Again all hands stood at the frozen gear, buntlines and leechlines in their cold fingers.

"Watch yourselves," roared the mate, clinging to a life-line as the sea swept her. "Watch your chance—now!"

Leaping through the water smother of the fore deck he battled to the topsail sheets, to ease them away; the second and the bosun with him.

"Hi—lee—yo—ho—ho, haul—awa—a—a—ay—ay—oh, hi—lee—oh," sang the singing apprentice, fore-hand at the weather clue line.

"Aloft and make her fast," bellowed the mate, the second and the bosun, all together; the bosun fighting into the shrouds to lead the way.

Above, the storm tops'l crashed and bellied at the buntlines; below, the quivering clipper staggered blindly, strained to the limit of her brave endurance; her main and mizen tops'ls tighter than the heads of war drums; the sea shouting around her, threatening disaster, savagely wrathful.

"Aloft!" roared the mate, his voice lost in the tumultuous morning.

"Aloft!" roared the second, his face to the gale, his voice beaten back, his clenched jaws scowling to the weather.

"Aloft—get that sail stowed!" roared the mate, staring up at the sky-pointing skysailmast, trembling above the battered tops'l.

"We make fly," said the Suva man, his head beaten upon by great hail stones, his bare hands no blacker than the weather.

"*Look!*" yelled a sailor, his hand outstretched, his finger pointing where, ahead of the bosun, ragged burlap about his feet, Wispy Cavendish fought up the reeling ratlines toward the tops'l yard.

"A sailor—by God!" said one, swarming to the shrouds, wind baffled.

"*Way for a sailor!*" shouted a young voice amidst grown warriors, the apprentice springing to the shrouds, aloft, higher and higher, defying wind and sea and hail, following where an old man led; passing the bosun.

"An' that's the way we'll pay Daddy Doyle for his *boots*," sang Wispy Cavendish, in the beating bunt of the topsail, his knuckles broken to bleeding, his arms waving, his burlapped feet upon the frozen foot ropes.

"And that's the way we'll pay Daddy Doyle for his *boots*," sang the row of sailors on the fore lower topsail yard, their voices drowned, the voice of each man sensed by the man beside him; snow driving over the sea; the ship invisible from aloft; hatches, fife-rails, houses, lost in driven foam; only her four high masts rising from the fury, coated with ice, lying over

at a dreadful slope; the helmsman, vague in the turmoil about him, as a haunted creature of the sea.

"A day, and she'll be safely through the ice," said the skipper, staring at the Horn chart upon the table, his finger following the line of the Antarctic ice drift.

The topsail furled, the mate's watch went below, rolling into their bunks "all standing"—oilskins and sea boots, soul and body lashings, upon their tired forms.

The second mate's watch, huddled beneath the fo'csle head, awaited what should be.

The morning watch passed, Wispy and his fellows slumbering, motionless as stones, rolling as the ship rolled, unaware that they rolled.

Throughout the hours from half past eight, when they came down from the fore topsail yard, until they were again awakened at a quarter to twelve, they rested tired limbs; the clipper speeding beneath black skies, under two topsails, the sea whipped to fury, the weather bitter.

"A few hours and she'll be out of the ice," said the skipper.

"Nor' eas'," said the man at the wheel, turning it over to the apprentice, at the change of the watch.

"Nor' eas'," said the apprentice, "let 'er rip!"

"Liverpool direc'," said the other, grinning back at him.

"Nor' eas', sir," said he, reporting to the mate upon the bridge.

"Nor' east," said the mate, "all right."

"Skipper's holding her to the norrard, ain't he?" said the second to the mate.

"Aye. He's getting her out of the ice," said the mate, "seen many bergs in the morning?"

"A few," said the second, going below.

The mate's watch, huddled under the fo'csle head, awaited what should be.

The watch passed, the trembling clipper driving.

The dog-watch coming, the hands gathered in the port fo'csle; the mate's watch in oilskins; the others in oilskin trousers only, their upper bodies freed, for a time, from that heavy clothing.

"Harris, where's that concertina?" asked one.

"Aye! get that concertina out an' give us some music," said another.

"We're bound for Liverpool direct," said another.

"Aye—an' we'll dance w'en we get there," said another.

"We ain't there yet," said an old gray-bearded man.

"Play that concertina, 'Arris," said another.

Harris played the concertina, its happy wheezes crying high above the weather's cry without; making music to roll and laugh above the sound of the sea, above the lash of the spray.

They sat smoking, twenty of them, seated at the little table, leaning against the bulk-heads; sitting dangle-legged in bunks; beating their feet, nodding their heads, to a concertina's merry tune.

Wispy, seated upon his old sea chest, rewrapped the Prince Alberts on his feet and legs.

"Wispy, y'er all dressed up, ain't ye, old son?" said one, between tunes.

"Make that concertina play. I likes to 'ear it," said Wispy, looking up.

"Aye—make that concertina play," said another.

"How's this then?" said Harris, smiling happily, his hands going out and in; his fingers pressing and releasing on the stops.

*"Oh, who's that a-knocking at my door?
says the fair young ladee,
Oh, who's that a-knocking at my door?
says the fair young ladee,
Oh, this is me, and no one else,
says Abel Brown, the sailor,
Oh, this is me, and no one else,
says Abel Brown the sailor."*

They stamped their feet, heads nodding, eyes shining, pipes puffing white smoke, one of them lifting the song—all of them coming in on the chorus, drowning the roar of the Horn sea, the drive of the spray, the wind thunder.

"Make that concertina play. I likes to 'ear it," said Wispy.

"I likes to 'ear it, too. It's Liverpool direc'," said another.

"Liverpool direc'," said another reminiscently.

"We'll dance w'en we get there, ol' son," said another.

"That's what we will," said another.

"We ain't there yet," said the old man with a gray beard.

Eight bells was struck upon the iron bell forward of the fo'csle; all hands crowding out to the night and the cold darkness.

"Wind's fallin', ain't it?" cried one.

"Aye! let it fall—let's get some sail on her. It's Liverpool direc'," laughed another. *"Look out there!"*

"Look out there!" cried another, feeling her tremble to the onrush of a boarding sea.

The sea roaring around them, they grasped life-

lines, hand-rails, shrouds and backstays, in the darkness.

The mate's whistle sounded, shrilling, half heard, faint, along the uproarious deck.

"I'll bet he's going to make sail," cried one.

"She's out of the ice by now, sir," said the skipper, on the bridge, "we've seen none since six bells of the afternoon watch. Set that fore lower, and main upper, topsail. I want to drive her."

"Loose fore lower tops'l—loose main upper tops'l," shouted the mate.

Men raced to the rigging, shouting one to another, unseen; their voices swept away.

Faintly, indistinguishable, a voice called from aloft, upon the fore.

"Sheet home—the man says 'sheet home'!" they shouted.

"It's that there black albatross—'ee wants 'er to fly," said one.

"He'd ought'er been a bird," said another.

"She'd fly anyway. She couldn't 'elp it," said another.

"Sing there, admiral! Where's th' admiral?" cried another.

"He's aloft on the main,—sing some one," cried another.

They set sail, crowding it upon the willing ship, giving her wing after wing; every one shouting, every one glad—for she was bound for Liverpool direct, and they would dance when they got there. They strung out in a long water-washed row upon the tops'l halyards, singing chantey after chantey, sending canvas, with the ice frozen stiff upon it, to the reeling mastheads,—

*"Oh, Johnny's gone, what shall I do?
Shiloh, Shiloh Brown.*

*Oh, Johnny's gone, what shall I do?
Johnny's gone to Rio.*

*Where Johnny goes, I must go too,
Shiloh, Shiloh Brown.*

*Where Johnny goes, I must go too,
Johnny's gone to Rio."*

Their voices rang, above the wail of the Horn wind,
the tumbled thunder of the boarding seas.

*Said he, 'my son you'll rue the day,
to me way hay yoh yah!'*

*Said he, 'My son you'll rue the day,
and a long time ago.*

*When off to sea you go away,
to me way hay yoh yah,*

*When off to sea you go away,
and a long time ago.'*

*And often since have I thought of his word,
to me way hay yoh yah,*

*And often since have I thought of his word,
and a long time ago."*

The clipper leaped, gathering her free feet to great plunges, as a beautiful colt to the whip.

"Sheet home the fore-sail," cried the mate.

"Sheet home the fore-sail," bellowed twenty sailors.

"Loose the main-sail," shouted the skipper, from the bridge.

"I'll drive her," said he, to himself.

"Gawd!" cried the bosun, to the second, "ain't she a flyer?"

"She knows she's going to Liverpool direct," laughed the second.

"We make fly," said the man from Suva.

"Bird—a bleedin' bird," yelled another.

"I'm a-goin' to dance at Mother Mitchell's when I gets to Liverpool," said one.

"You ain't there yet," said another. "Put y'r weight on them 'alyards."

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed the old gray-bearded man.

"We'll see the moon when the clouds break. She'll be rising soon," said the bosun, to the second.

"Sing, admiral, sing,—sing us a chantey," shouted one.

"Aye, sing, admiral,—sing!" shouted another.

"Sing,—sing, little admiral. Let the boys 'ear a sailor singing," said old Wispy Cavendish, beside the admiral, at the mizen topgallant halyards.

"Ranzo was no sailor,

Ranzo, boys, Ranzo,

But the son of a New York tailor,

Ranzo, boys, Ranzo.

And he shipped on board of a whaler,

Ranzo, boys, Ranzo,

And he shipped on board of a whaler,

Poor old Reuben Ranzo."

"Belay!" yelled the mate, "what y' tryin' to do? Carry 'em away?"

"The mate says 'Belay,'" yelled twenty sailors, on the mizen topgallant halyards.

"Hoist the fore," shouted the mate.

*"Old Storm-along is dead and gone,
to me wa-ay, Storm-along,
Old Storm-along is dead and gone,
way, aye, aye, old Storm-along."*

"*Belay—belay!* What in hell y' tryin' to do with her?" shouted the mate.

"Ha, ha, ha," laughed twenty sailors. "The mate says, 'what y' tryin' to do wi' her?'"

"Liverpool direc', sir," shouted one.

"We're goin' to dance at Mother Mitchell's," shouted another.

"Loose the royals,—*walk 'em up*—lively does it," shouted the mate.

"She's got a crew," said the skipper, to himself, upon the bridge.

"Sing, admiral, sing," cried a sailor.

"Walk her up, sons," shouted the apprentice, "*this way,*

*"John Brown's knapsack's number ninety-three,
John Brown's knapsack's number ninety-three,
John Brown's knapsack's number ninety-three,
as we go rolling home.
And it's glory, glory, hallelujah,
And it's glory, glory, hallelujah,
And it's glory, glory, hallelujah,
as we go rolling home."*

Twenty sailors lifted it, stamping forty feet along her dancing teak wood decks.

"Belay—belay all!" yelled the mate.

"Belay all,—come up behind!" yelled the sailor at the pin.

"Liverpool direct!" yelled another.

"Mother Mitchell an' her gals," cried another.

"She's driving," said the skipper on the bridge.

"We make fly," said the Suva man.

"She'd fly anyway—she couldn't help it," said another.

"Check in the weather braces," shouted the skipper, from the bridge.

"Weather braces!" shouted the mate. "Starboard watch to the main, port watch to the cross-jack."

"Haul away, sons! Round 'em in. She wants to fly," shouted the second.

"Sing,—some one sing, so's we can pull together," shouted one.

"Sing! for Liverpool direct, and a dance ashore," shouted another.

At the main braces Wispy Cavendish was singing, at the cross-jack the singing apprentice, keeping time together; all hands hauling to the long song of it, water to their knees.

"Hi—leeee—yo—ho! haul—away—ay—oh! Hi—leeee—yo—ho! Hi-lee-ОН!"

The clouds broke, above a ragged horizon; torn edges, frayed, and tumbled o'er the sea; masses of disaster heaped upon the sky rim; a cold moon shining through, silvering the water—gleaming a molten path-way down the stormy night.

"*My God!*" cried the skipper, on his bridge.

"*My God!*" cried the mate, at the lee main braces.

At the wheel the man from Suva stood, his great

eyes bulged, his white teeth shining through far parted lips.

"Sing, admiral, sing," cried Wispy Cavendish, and turning *saw beyond the racing clipper's bow*.

"Sing, admiral, sing!" he yelled, "*sing wi' me, son!*"

"Hi — leeee — yo — ho — ho, hi — lee — yo — ho — ho, haul — awa — ay — ay — ay - OH!"

The *Golden Age*, her wide wings flying to the wild Horn wind, the grim sea fury-lashed about her, a dim moon drear upon disastrous waters, swept upon her way.

"Hi—leeee—oh, hi—leeee—"

Head on, high lifted, leaping all a-quiver, trembling throughout her lovely length, bound for bright dance floors of home, she struck upon the dismal parapet of an awaiting berg; the loose cakes grinding, roaring, tinkling, falling about her dying beauty; the storm clouds driving down across the moon's dimmed face, shading the sea,

Way—for—a—*Sailor!*

FLOWER OF THE MORNING

TELL them, when I'm gone, then,
Say, "He was glad to go."
Say, "He heard a ringing voice, a great wind
blow."

Say, "He'd always wandered in a sort of maze."
Say, "His life had puzzled him, through all its days."
Say, "He knew that this would bring
An end to wonder:
Flames of light, and song a-wing,
And doubting trampled under."

Tell them,
 *"Death is but a birth,
 'A burst of flowers,
 'Fairer than the blooms of earth
 Its beauty ours."*

THE BOSUN OF THE *GOLDENHORN'S* YARN

A CROWD was down at Toxteth Lock, men and women; stevedores, loafers, and pier-hand jumps, standing in the wind and drizzle. Toxteth is the last lock between the Liverpool docks and the river Mersey. In Toxteth the big clipper, 'Frisco-bound, was lying, awaiting the tide to take it to sea. At her fore skysail truck, the loftiest mast-head in port, blue Peter fluttered.

She came gliding through the lock, looking like a dainty lady, bright and slender. Her sides shone with fresh paint, and her standing rigging glistened in the sun, between the showers, with its coating of tar and varnish. Her brass work dazzled a man's eyes; and her teak chart-house, skylights and taffrail, scrubbed with pumice and oil and with three coats of varnish on top of the oiling, were a bright sight for the eyes of any man—sailor or 'longshore loafer.

There were hands aloft casting the gaskets free along her topsail yards. The anchor was coming to the hawse-pipe, and old Warren, the fellow the hands called "Wild-Eyed Parrot," was rousing a chantey. The breeze was coming fresh from outside, fluttering her flags and bellying her canvas. Fin Hansen was at the wheel; and at the galley door stood the half-breed cook, drawing the bow across his old fiddle. The stamp of the hands around the windlass, the wind, the flags fluttering, and the voices of the folks on the

lock, who were watching the clipper to sea, all seemed to swing with the tune of Parrot's chantey.

"In Derry town there dwelt a maid—

Mark well what I do say—

In Derry town there dwelt a maid,

And she was mistress of her trade.

We'll go no more a-rovin' with you, fair maid.

A-rovin', a-rovin', oh, rovin's been my ruin—

We'll go no more a-rovin' with you, fair maid."

Standing forward amongst the crowd on the lock was the second mate's girl. She was a little thing with sandy-red hair and clear hazel eyes—a clipper-built slip of a girl. Clegg, the second mate, left the fo'csle head and climbed over the railing, and, standing on the beading that ran around the clipper's side, held with one hand while he bent over toward his girl.

The girl turned to old Mick Sinclair, the boss stevedore, who stood beside her, and smiled into his face. Mick put his big paws under her elbows and lifted her to Clegg. A whip of a breeze came over the river as she kissed him good-by; and as Mick lowered her to the ground she cried—

"There's luck to you, Willie—round the Horn with your skysails set."

Mick laughed and called—

"There's to make a bold sailor of ye, my boy, eh?"

And Clegg, climbing back to the clipper's deck, looked back and answered—

"Aye—a bold sailor it will be now."

So the *Goldenhorn* went seaward for 'Frisco and round the Horn.

We towed into a piping norther when we came to

sea, and sheeted home topsails, topgallants, and main royal. The packet got a touch of sea fever, as a harbor-weary clipper will, and away she went—footing it down the narrow seas and racing for the Western Ocean like a colt turned free to roam the open pastures.

When darkness fell we saw the flash of a shore light, far away across the water. It faded; and, leaving the land astern, we dipped to the long Western Ocean swells. The packet lifted her forefoot high, and, dipping low in the dark sea-hollows, threw the salt sprays far over her bows.

We had forgotten the folk who watched us seaward till the second dog watch came; and the half-breed sea-cook got his old fiddle out. Then we, away forward, heard him, bringing to mind the bright lights of home of a night-time and the faces of the folk on Toxteth Lock; so we went into the fo'csle and sat on our sea-chests and in our bunks with our legs dangling, and there talked of other ships and of ports all about the edge of the windy old sea.

When eight bells went we gathered beneath the bridge upon the quarterdeck, and, looking up, we could see the face of the mate, shining pale within the binnacle light—so that he looked like the ghost of a drowned sailor. We were glad when he called our names and we heard each other's voices.

The ship was riding easy and quiet, like a great fowl of the water. There was breeze enough to keep everything full, and, all sheets and braces being taut, there was no creaking of gear such as you often hear of a night upon a ship at sea. We could hear old One Eye, taking the wheel over, repeat the course—

the course for 'Frisco and round the Horn—drawling it slow and easy—

“Wes'-by-sou', half-sou'—wes'-by-sou', half-sou' it is.”

We could hear the lookout man, reporting to the officer on the bridge, sing out from the fo'csle head, slow and full of music—

“Al-l-l-l-l's we-l-l-l, sir.”

And the mate muttered—

“All right.”

Dawns and nightfalls came and went again aboard the outbound clipper. Some days she staggered under skysails with a creaming wake far astern, and the sea-fowl that followed her, wearying with their speed. Some days she lay with her yards upon the backstays and the cold, green sprays whipping over her as she beat into the head sea. At sunset time one evening we sighted an island—a purple, mysterious-seeming jewel—that stood above the crimson sea.

We picked up a fresh trade and sped down the tropic latitudes under all sail. We lay upon the Line in the steamy doldrum calms for a day or two, and, again meeting the trades, swept on a southerly course. With six topsails set and shining in the lightning flares we ran through a Plate *pampero*—the thunder rolling over us and the great raindrops glistening in the night's terrific glare like myriads of falling diamonds. With a southerly wind we felt the first breath of the Horn; and got preventer sheets upon the upper topsails, and weather-boardings round the taffrail.

And by and by we came to the Horn—black and blowing and cold—aye, bitter cold. Everything aloft was frozen. Bare hands to handle frozen topsails:

bare hands and bleeding—and darkness and the sea terror over the waters. Always that moaning, moaning, in the night, that all men know who follow the sea in ships.

Twenty seamen sat within the clipper's fo'c'sle, some in yellow oilskins and some in black, all wet and shiny, bearded faces under dripping sou'westers, wreathed in thick smoke. Men sat binding torn hands and hands rubbed raw with handling frozen canvas aloft—one with fingers crushed in a brace-block. They all sat waiting—waiting for the day; seafaring men outbound with a dainty-heeled clipper ship.

Morning came, and a Horn hurricane; and it snowed—a cold, white horror. Night came again, and the hurricane and snow. Life-lines were frozen hard, so that it hurt a man with torn hands to grasp them, and a sob would be driven down his throat by the yelling Horn winds. A topsail blew to ribbons, and up we went to lash its ragged ribbons on the spar; and came down again, choking for a chance to breathe in that great wind.

The sea lifted her head and roared across the deck, waist deep in the darkness.

Morning came, and the hurricane and snow.

Clegg went to the bridge and shouted to the mate—close in his ear—

“Five hands missing, sir.”

And the mate said—

“All right.”

What else could he say?

The hurricane blew on, yelling through the shrouds of that packet hidden in the snow and the spray, with her railing awash in the sea.

The mate fought his way to the chart-house, and, leaning in, shouted to the skipper—

“Wheel’s carried away, sir.”

And, looking up, the skipper said—

“All right.”

What else could he say?

Day went like the night before it, and another night came with the same fury of wind and bitterness of cold. At nightfall a comber lopped over the waist and roared outboard to lee, taking the galley with it and the half-breed cookie, and his old fiddle too.

We ate hard-tack that night, and knew no warmth or rest. The big seas pounded her. We were aching tired, and soaked with the cold sea. Our bunks and bedding were gone overside.

The gale blew itself out by morning, and she lay rolling in the trough—her quarter boats and bridge gone in the darkness of the night.

Willie Clegg blew his whistle; for he was skipper now. Skipper and mate were gone when, unseen by any one, the bridge went.

We went aft to try to rig a jury wheel. Some went aloft to cut away rags of torn sail-cloth from the spars.

She rolled in the trough; no wind—just a Horn calf. No sky; nothing but a great coldness above and all around. Everything black—cloud and water; and a long, high swell to the sea. And always that far-away sound, that low moaning from under the sea rim.

After a bit the snow came again, hiding the world from us, falling in great flakes like a shroud and covering the decks inches deep.

Men's voices, calling from aloft, sounded clear and cold—as the snow looked. Day passed, and evening came again—the dog watch; but no fiddling from cookie's fiddle now.

All hands sat shivering in the gutted fo'csle; huddled on deck, crowding together for warmth. Some slept. Some bound their bleeding hands. At eight bells we went aft, standing under where the bridge had been. We heard the man at the wheel repeat the course—the course for 'Frisco and round the Horn.

“Wes'-by-no'th, half-no'th—wes'-by-no'th, half-no'th it is.”

We heard the lookout man from the fo'csle head reporting to the officer of the deck, singing it out slow and filled with music—

“Al-l-l-l-l's we-l-l-l, sir.”

And Clegg muttered—

“All right.”

We went back to the fo'csle, huddling together for warmth.

The clipper lay in the sea trough, rolling like doom. Chains clanged against the masts, and spars groaned. I leaned out into the black night and listened to the sea moaning, and turned back to the fo'csle where the hands were huddled together. One Eye was whining a song—a chantey tune—

“Come all you young sailors wot follows the sea.”

Toward midnight the swell got worse; and, lurching in the troughs, the packet rolled her railings under, groaning.

There was a sudden great crash, quickly followed by another; a grinding and tearing sound. Clegg shouted to cut away the wreckage. The fore and

main masts had gone overside—ripped out by the rolling.

When morning came, still calm; but no snow now. There was the Horn, black as the sea and the sky. We stood on deck, all that were left of us, and stared at the Horn. It was snowing over the land; a thin shroud falling, and merging sea and land together.

Suddenly there was a shout from the lookout man, and we all turned to look.

Coming across the sea, a few miles on the port bow, was a green-painted steamer with two buff funnels. We could see the ripple about her forefoot. She was crowding the steam toward us. Some one spoke.

“One o’ them Aberdeen White Stars—home-bound from the colonies. Thank God.”

There was no need for us to fly a signal. They could see—a dismasted clipper with bridge and boats and wheel gone overside, lying in the Horn troughs close inshore.

Coming close to windward on our port, she dropped a boat. We gathered at the quarter rail and waited. There was no need for them to ask us any questions. One by one we piled over the railing and dropped into their boat. We did not trouble to ask them who they were—we were cold and wet and hungry, close inshore in the Horn troughs.

When the hands were all aboard their officer climbed to the clipper’s deck and went to the poop, where Clegg stood alone. They spoke together for a minute or two, the steamer officer waving his arm and seeming to plead with Clegg; but Clegg shaking his head.

Coming back to the boat, the officer told his men to give way.

We went from the side of the old *Goldenhorn*—

from her wet, rusty side and her gale-tormented decks. Clegg stood upon her poop, looking toward the land.

We drew near to the steamer and saw her name—*Damascus*, of London.

When we boarded her the hands of the old clipper went below for warmth, and food and life; but I stood upon the steamer's bridge with the boat officer and her commander. We gazed toward the clipper—the clipper bound for 'Frisco and round the Horn. The snow was falling, and slowly hiding her from view.

The boat officer spoke to his commander :

"He's her second mate, sir; he refused to leave her. 'As long as she floats,' he said."

The steamer captain spoke.

"A bold young sailor," said he.

Then I remembered the kiss that Clegg's girl gave him—to make him a bold sailor and take him round the Horn with his skysails set.

The *Damascus* called at Montevideo and the Canaries. On the day that she called at Montevideo the *Goldenhorn* was posted "missing" at Lloyd's and the bell was rung for her.

When the *Damascus* came to her dock there was a slip of a girl with sandy-red hair awaiting her there. It was I who went ashore and spoke to her. She stayed around the dock till nightfall, and then went slow away.

Since the day the *Damascus* brought me in I have been shore bosun for the Aberdeen White Star; for I lost a hand that time we rolled in the trough off the Horn and can no longer follow the sea.

Each time one of their steamers comes in from the colonies and round the Horn there is a slip of a woman

with sandy-red hair and clear though troubled hazel eyes to meet her.

Each time I go aboard and ask her commander a question.

Then I go ashore again and speak to the girl.

Each time she stays around the dock till nightfall, and then goes slow away.

STOWAWAY

I **CROSSED** the gangway in the winter's raining,
Late in the night, when it was dreary dark;
The only sounds the rain's hiss, and complaining
Of chafing hawsers holding that lean barque.

She sailed before the dawn. The evening found me
A sea-sick nipper, hidden in spare sails.
I feared they'd drag me out, and maybe drown me,—
The barque was trembling, dipping both her rails.

Soon I crept forth. Her long lee rail was sweeping.
A homing ship drove by with hurrying feet,
A school of porpoises all round her leaping,
While stars dipped low, her dizzied spars to greet.

"Three cheers!" they cried, and I could hear their
voices,
And the sharp beating of her clanged iron bells;
Her musics faded, merged in the sea's noises,
And she was gone, loud cheering down the swells.

And in me then a something seemed to waken,
And I was mazed. It was as though the sea,
Or the big topsails by the night wind shaken
Had cast a sort of magic over me.

The mast heads reeled. In the bright North the Dip-
per

Hung dazzling diamonds round her sails, ghost white,
The seas were dim, and the deep breathing clipper
Quivered her feet, and shook with sheer delight.

It's long ago, my first night on the sea,
And I'm grown old, and sailing days are sped.
And I am waiting, waiting patiently,
Till other topsails gleam above my head.

There'll be a wharf, I know, where I am going,
There'll be a gangway for the likes o' me;
There'll be some lofty packet seaward blowing,—
They'll be fine ships on that eternal sea!

TWINKLE-BRIGHT

IT was wild weather by Tyne Dock. The winter gales were piping across the gray North Sea; sleet and snow driving over the dark water. The houses by the water-front were close shut, aglow from little windows. The fishing-smacks lay at their wharves, safe from the sea's raging. The masts of ships rose as forests from the dark dock water.

A lad, seeking shelter from the winter night, wandered, shivering, along the water-front. Coming to the dock-side, seeing the masts of the ships, he stopped; recalling summer evenings when he had seen ships come in from sea; sailors singing at their capstans. Barefooted, freezing to the marrow, he stood staring through the winter weather; hearing the sound of the sea outside as the cry of many voices calling. Before him lay a long, black-painted, lofty ship; arising in tier on tier of tapered spar; her shrouds, lost in the storm above, a web of whispering mystery. Knowing not whither, or why, as though charmed by the spell of a hidden witch-wife, he crossed her gangway; standing, alone and frightened on her deck—no warm lights to welcome him, no glowing windows, no smell of smoke from little chimneys—naught save the moan of the sea beyond the bar.

A clipper ship was driving to the open sea, meeting the sweep of Biscay, the shout of the west wind, the surge of the ocean; her canvas straining, her masts, loosing themselves in the wet fog above, heeling far

over to the drumming of the wind in shroud and back-stay; her fog-horn wailing warning to her sisters hidden in thick weather.

"'Oof!" said the bosun of the big ship. "She's sure a-goin' to blow."

"Bosun," said the mate, "go get those preventer sheets up from the sail locker. Get 'em aloft. We're goin' to need 'em, bosc."

Down to the sail locker went the bosun: a stubble-bearded man with heavy arms, and sinews as the sinews of an island-bred bull, whistling as he went—

"A Yankee ship came down the river."

"Two of you lubbers," said he, "get them preventer sheets out o' the sail locker, an' look alive."

"Aye, aye, sir," and down went a couple of sailors, Tom Swift and "Bloody" Quayle by name, rough fellows given to cursing whatever came their way; fine weather, foul weather, wind, calm, port or sea.

"Bloody," said Tom Swift, "if *I* was as ugly as wot *you* be, damn me if I wouldn't jump over the side an' say 'Ere goes nobody,' damn me now if I wouldn't."

"Tom," said Bloody, "if *I* didn't 'ave no more sense than wot *you* 'ave, you boardin'-'ouse bum, you ring-tail cat from 'Tanarivo, I'd— Well, what the hell— S'welp me if here ain't a blighted stowaway!"

"A stowaway! Well, I'll be damned!" said the two of them together. "Ain't the little beggar 'ungry-lookin'? Sonny, 'ow did you leave your mommer?"

The lad stared up at them, white-faced and faint, his clothing wet, his lips a-tremble.

"Well! The pore little beggar," said Bloody.

"Well! The pore little beggar: that is wot I says too," said Tom.

"Bosun—bosun! You can blast my dead-lights if here ain't a blighted stowaway," said the two of them, speaking together; as old pals will.

Down to the sail locker went the stubble-faced bosun, his hooky fingers grasping the ladder rungs as though he too were related to the ring-tail cat from 'Tanarivo.

"Well! Ain't 'e the 'ungriest-lookin' little beggar? Well, I *will* be damned!" said the bosun.

"You, you two—wot in the blankety! W'y in the blankety! W'ere are those tops'l preventer sheets, eh? Get 'em aloft. Get 'em aloft, quick, see?" he added.

"Mister," said he to the shiver-faced boy, "you'll come along an' be interdoosed to the mate—'e'll be pleased to meet up with you, sir."

Aft behind the bosun went the shiver-faced boy, staggering to the lift of the clipper's feet, frightened to the soul of him.

"Mister, you kin blink me if 'ere ain't a little jewel for the cook to thicken the soup with, sir," said the bosun to the mate.

"Well," said the mate, "and is *that* so? Soup, my lad, eh? Did you say soup, bouse? Sonny, when did you last taste soup, eh?"

The shiver-faced boy stood all of a whimper at the very thought of warm soup in his cold little belly.

"Bosun," said the mate, "you'll take and introduce that little swab to Solomon—that's wot you'd better do, bosun. Take him along."

The bosun beckoned with a crooked finger, a finger short one joint—on account of a trifling accident upon a tops'lyard while running the easting down one time—and, "You come along o' me, little old Tentoes," said he.

"Solomon! Solomon! If *I* was as like twin monkeys as wot *you* be, I'd niver in this world have the face to sign on for cook of no ship," said the bosun.

"You wouldn't, hey? Well, my son—it's buttons for beans you'll be gettin' in *your* soup. You'd best watch out, my son; see?" said Solomon, the cook of that swing-along, fly-away, fast-footed clipper.

"An' wot," he added, "is *that*? Where did you set your blasted rat-trap? Bosun, 'aven't you *any* 'eart?"

"Solomon," said the bosun, "you'll cut your fancy lingo an' you'll feed this 'ere deep-water sea-farin' party a dollop o' hot bean soup, see?"

"Soup? Did you say soup? Well, well now, bosun! That's a lingo wot I recalls to 'ave listened to afore. Sunshine, did your mommer ever feed you on soup?" said the sea-cook.

Inside the galley stood the cold-toed, shivering boy, his thin little nostrils all of a quiver—as when a spotted dog finds a bush with the birds in it.

"W-r-r-r-r-r—r-r-r-r-r-r," said he, all of a shiver.

"I used to 'ave a cage full o' w'istlin' canaries meself when I was in them coolie ships—but that's a new w'istle to me, my lad. Sit you down, sonny-boy," said old Solomon.

Putting a skinny arm all about the little lad's shoulder, he led him to the coal locker, opposite the big bright stove, black and shiny as a witch's boil-pot; covered with shining pots and pans, and pannikins and skilly-cans hanging in a long row upon hooks above it.

"Sonny-boy, you put this to them little lips o' yourn, now; see?" the white-whiskered sea-cook whispered to the youngster, cuddling close up to him, as an old

bitch with a lost kitten picked out of the village pond; holding a pannikin filled to the brim with hot pea-soup to his lips.

The boy sipped, and sipped, and sipped; the warm glow from the big stove going all through him; the hot soup sending his blood running; the cook's friendly arm all twisty-twisty about him; the stubble-faced bosun standing by.

"Solomon," said he, "you let me know when you've got 'im all-sir-garney, an' I will find the little lost beggar a 'ome."

The wind piped across the Bay of Biscay; the clipper rolling, pitching, swinging to the whistle of it; her six storm topsails bellied, tight as drum-heads—tighter than six drum-heads drumming a regiment to war—her three lower topgallants straining as eager wings of homing pigeons, white, graceful, slender; dainty as the feet of girls who dance beside the bar at Tony Arnaud's, when it's wet weather and the clippers come to port; the fore-and-afters set and humming to the Biscay gale; the man at the wheel stamping his feet, watching the lubber's point swing, singing, "Was you ever down to Noo Orleens?" under his breath, the skipper being in the chart-house not twenty feet from him.

The mate, from the bridge, shouted to the bosun, who was just down from aloft, where he had been to see the sort of job that Tom and Bloody had made on the preventer sheets.

"Bose," said he, "where's the bloated alderman?"

"The w'ich?" asked the bosun.

"That little 'ungry beggar you picked out o' the shell o' that brace-block a while back, bosun."

"Oh! I clear forgot all about 'im. Strike my liver pretty pink, sir! I certainly 'ad."

"The skipper wants to see 'im, bosun—at 'is convenience," and the mate winked.

"Solomon, 'ave you seen anything of a w'ite-faced warbler? One o' them little checker-feathered birds wot goes a-peepin' an' a-'oppin', an' a-lookin' for worms when the tide's out, Solomon?" asked the bosun.

"You ain't talkin' to me, mister. I ain't seed no sich a animal."

"Solomon, if you was any bloomin' huglier than wot you be the ship's bell would crack—that's wot's restin' on your kidneys, m'lad. You 'ad better be watchin' your 'ealth."

"Bosun, you don't talk like wot the old woman who raised you 'ad a right to expect, see? Argue religion, pea, bean, or turtle soup—but don't you go for to get personal; not with a squint like wot you keeps in your mug, my son."

"Solomon, the skipper o' this here ship—ain't she a pretty one on a beam wind, eh?—the skipper 'e wants a wisit from that there stray bird o' Paradise wot you've been a-fillin' with thin soup; see?"

"You tell the skipper, with or without my compliments—w'ich ain't a-goin' to damage 'is appetite—*did* you ever 'ear tell of a skipper as wanted canned tripe more'n once a day? Did you, bose? That when my little chickadee wakes up if 'e wants to come an' wisit—well!—seein' as 'e's skipper o' this 'ere ship, maybe he may; see? You tell the old beggar *that*."

"Solomon, I never 'ad no respect for any man as cooked on a ship. It's a nigger's trade—a nigger's an' a chink's."

Up went the skinny arm of the sea-cook, and down went the stubble face of the bosun; the bosun running

bandy-legged along the deck, Solomon on his tail with a ladle of bean-soup whisking about his ears.

"Sail on the weather bow, sir!" shouted the lookout; Solomon stopping, the ladle upheld above his skull-cap; the bosun stopping, one leg in front of the other, his arms up, his fists doubled, a grin on his face; the mate on the bridge-head peering into the smother; all hands crowding to the fo'c'sle head to see an inbound clipper slipping through the smoking Biscay sea—the fourmast *Shenandoah*, out of Maine, 'Frisco for Hamburg with grain; a big ship, a dandy ship, a ship to run, or beat, or carry a wind abeam; a packet to kick up her heels in the face of the Liverpool clippers, the Greenock ships, the wool men from London river.

"'Oof!" said the bosun. "Ain't she a-boomin' though?"

"Was aboard 'er seven year ago—I was 'er bosun," said Tom Swift.

"*You* was 'er bosun, was you? You—you broke-down bum, you. You wasn't no more than a common low-down starvin' ordinary—that's wot *you* wasn't, m'lad," said Bloody Quayle.

"Murphy is skipper on her. Oh, ain't 'e just a-givin' 'er 'er pretty 'ead, what?" said Tom, ignoring Bloody.

The *Shenandoah* came toward them, carrying her high kites—flying all her feathers to the Biscay wind; a lady, a lady with a foot for running on the ballroom floor; a big flag breaking out at her fog-smothered peak, a swirl of billows all about her bow.

Climbing high, out of the spray, the hands of the Tyne ship swarmed into the foreshrouds to watch her pass up channel; Solomon, on the topgallant rail, waving the soup-ladle above his head; the carpenter look-

ing out of his shop-door; the steward, his white apron blowing round his neck, peeping from a cabin port.

"Give 'er three, bullies—three—all together, *now*."

The sailors of the Tyne ship gave her three; ringing over the gray Biscay sea; ringing as the storm-winds ring amidst the topmast rigging clear and loud.

In the *Shenandoah's* rigging stood the Yankee sailors, watching the outbound packet dip to sea.

"She's a fly-foot packet, boys. I'll bet she can run, eh?" they said.

"Hark to 'em! They're giving us three. Look at the old gazabo on her topgallant rail! I'll bet he's old man Jonah come to life again," said a sailor of the flying *Shenandoah*.

"Give 'em back their three, sons—three an' another. Send 'em to sea right—now, *together*," said the bosun of the booming *Shenandoah*.

The Yankee sailors gave the outbound Tyne ship three, roaring them over the sea; fog dripping in low, half-lifted, wind-drifted, curtains all around the ships: their wailing fog-horns sounding; everything gray.

"Oh, my sonny boy! But ain't old Murphy letting that there packet crack along, now?" cried the red-headed bosun of the big black Tyne ship.

"An' wot, my lad, wot har you hup to 'ere; eh, my little chickadee?" cried Solomon the sea-cook, staring open-eyed at a lad beside him in the rigging, who knelt upon the wet rail, waving his hat, shouting:

"Hoorah! Oh, hoorah! Ain't she pretty, though?"

The *Shenandoah*, out of Maine, that fine Yankee clipper, was gone in the sea-smother; green swirls whirling where they lost her heels in the fog-hid sea; sea-gulls, gray birds, following her shoreward; a low

whisper of her fog-horn wailing; echoing, and gone.

"Ooof!" said the bosun. "Some o' you ducks go take a pull on them there weather braces. First thing *you* knows Tim Murphy will be bound around the Horn again, sons—on the heels of this here ship, my lads! Weather braces, weather braces, every one: an' *step lively*," he shouted.

"Oh-ye, oh-yo-ho, heave-oh-heave-oh, haul-away-oh," he bellowed; his back bent and doubled; hauling in upon the weather braces.

"Well, now! Your bloomin' 'ighness, sir, pardon of me for addressin' you; but where the devil did *you* drop in from, eh? An' did you give the skipper a permit for to go to sea?" he asked a lad who stood beside him, with his small hands upon the cold, wet rope.

The skipper was upon the bridge, a wizened little man who looked as though the first breeze that came over the sea might blow him away; a fellow from somewhere up by Anglesea, Holyhead, or some port beside the Irish Sea; a chap raised up on kippered herring and finny-haddy from the Scotch fishing-boats; raised at the sea's side; schooled in a fishing-lugger; boy in a clipper; so long at sea that the scales and the barnacles were about getting a foothold upon the tough hide down his back.

Without so much as blinking a lid, lifting a nostril or saying a word, he stared at the stowaway hauling in upon the weather braces.

The mate, walking aft, called to the boy.

"Son," he said, "what might your name be?"

"They call me 'Slim,' sir. I ain't never 'ad no other name."

"Slim, eh? Well that ain't name enough to sign on

no seaman by; not as I'd say so. You come along o' me."

He took him to the skipper on the bridge.

"What's your name, feller?" asked the skipper.

"Slim, sir."

"Slim, eh? Well, that's a fit one too! What's the second part of it?"

"I ain't never 'ad no other, sir."

"Slim, eh? Slim? Well, see here, my youngster—you go for to be a willing hopper, a royal mast greaser of a Saturday morning, a cable chipper an' so on, an' I'm a-goin' to sign you on the articles o' this here ship."

"He'll fetch us *luck*," whispered the skipper to the mate.

"That's wot 'e will, sir. I've seed it afore," replied the mate.

They called him to the chart-house, there to sign him on upon the ship's articles as an ordinary seaman.

"What will we call him, mister?" asked the skipper of the mate.

"Captain, sir, it's got me. Let's ask the bosun, sir. 'E's got a good 'ead; reads books an' the Bible an' such-like things, quite a deal in the second dog-watch, as I believe."

They called the bosun.

"Bosun, here's a hand with no name to him. We've got to have a name to sign him by. We can't just write him down for Slim—'twouldn't look well at the shipping-office."

"No, sir, that's so! I ain't no 'and to name folk, sir; not exceptin' if there's summat a-worryin' of my temper, sir: then to be sure it do come easy-like."

"Ain't you got some books in your room, bosc—
a book for instance with names in it?"

"Well, sir, I'll tell you, sir, there's the Bible sure enough, sir. That's chock-a-block full o' names from cover to cover; but we gone an' named the cook out o' that a'ready; an' three o' the foremast hands, too, sir. 'Twouldn't look well for the ship to 'ave too many o' they sort o' names—not with the kind o' crew as she's got."

The sailmaker stepped up to the poop, looking for wrinkles in the new mizzen lower topgallant, and they called him to the chart-house.

"Sails, wot would you name a boy if your wife was to 'ave such a thing now, eh?" asked the mate.

Sails opened his eyes wide; his mouth too, so that the needle between his lips fell to the deck; a skein of roping-twine hanging about his neck blowing upon the wind.

"*My wife?* Well! That is news to me. I ain't never 'ad none, sir. Not leastways since I passed the fifty-year mark."

"I'll tell you wot, sir," said the bosun, "you might call 'im Guts, just seein' 'ow 'e's so thin an' little like, an' short o' such things. You could spell it with a Z instead of a S, then 'e'd look like a Rotterdam Dutchie."

"Please, sir, I ain't no damn Dutchie. I'm from the Tyne, sir," said the boy.

"Well! Now there's a right to a young feller 'avin' a name wot 'e likes the sound of too; that's so. It gets me, sir—I'm done," and the bosun walked away to give an ordinary seaman, who was loafing on his job, a couple of kicks and a cuff or so.

"I'll tell you, sir, wot you do," said the steward, his

face showing through the chart-house port. "You just call him Innards; that's the same thing as guts, sir; and there ain't no one's feelin's 'urt no place. That's a good enough name for any one from Salem, Mass., to the Clyde shipyards, seems to me."

"Have you any objection, my lad, to the name of Innards?" asked the skipper.

"No, sir."

So Innards it was from that day on.

After the lad had a meal or so of Solomon's pea-soup, and a piece of hard-tack, the peaked look left his face, and the hunger his eyes; being by nature a lad given to the skinny look he would never be likely to grow fat, even if they gave him canned tripe for every meal, and best Jamaica molasses spread on his hard-tack. He was a handy lad, willing and obliging to his betters; taking smiles from Chips for a calking-mallet handed just when the deck-seam was right for calking, or a "good for you, sonny," from Sails for grabbing a skein of twine just as the wind was blowing it overboard; and a grin now and again from one or other of the foremast hands; never a man upon that big black Tyne ship having the taste of a curse for him—which is *not* the way it goes with *most* ordinaries. The result was that, despite the fuss and trouble it had been to find a name for him, and despite the argufying the finding of that name had caused, when one day Tom Swift, coming to the galley for the hash-kid, overheard Solomon call the lad "Twinkle-Bright," Twinkle-Bright from then on was his name all along the decks of that packet.

It was "Twinkle-Bright, take a pot of pork slush, my son, an' skip up an' grease that there main sky-sailmast down," from the bosun; and, "Twinkles, my

lad, go get a box o' soojie-moojie an' polish the brass-work—an' see as you *polishes* it," from the second mate; and: "Twink, 'ere's a pannikin o' nice canned tripe wot the old man left at supper last night, m'lad. You gobble it up now; an' see as you washes the pannikin afore you brings it back to me, sonny," from old Solomon the sea-cook; and at night, when the weather was fresh, and he couldn't leave the poop himself, the mate would say: "'Ere, Bright, me boy, pop you down to my room an' cut me up a fill o' 'baccy—an' don't be long. Light it, me lad, afore you brings it up; but don't you go for to take more'n a couple o' whiffs at it yourself, son. Run along now."

In the evening, when all hands were sitting in a ring about the main hatch, Neilson the Norwegian pulling his concertina in and out, or Skows the Swede blowing on his flute, making sounds such as the blackbirds make when the green apples start to turn golden, or Bloody Quayle drawing the bow to and fro across Tom Swift's fiddle, and the feet of a couple or so of the hands going *skee-dee, skee-dee*, up and down and round about, old Lon Yont, the Finnish carpenter, would say:

"Keep kerwiet now. De kid iss goin' to sing—sing us a song, Têrwinkle, my leedle poy."

Then Twinkle-Bright would stand on the hatch, in the center of the ship's company, and would sing; singing the same song for them over and over; or singing some new song over and over after one of them, until he got it right; while they all sat around him on their haunches, staring up and laughing.

"Zing for us, Dwingle; zing now, zunny."

Twinkle-Bright would sing till the little silver stars twinkled in the face of the deep, blue sea, as if they too

were beating fingers and toes to the time of the lad's song :

*"My gal's a high-born ladee.
She's dark, but not too shadee;
Feathered like a peacock, just as gay;
She's not colored, she was born that way,"*

he'd sing; or :

*"Nobody knows what fun was there;
Nobody knows, I do declare.
Nobody knows what fun I see,
No, nobody knows indeed but me,"*

or maybe Tom Swift's favorite song—

*"Jabbersee ha-kee, jabbersee ho-kee
Jabbersee dory pory;
Hikee, pikee, sikee, crikee,
Jimmy go paddle your dory."*

There was no end to the songs that he sang; and often, when the wind was coming on the beam, at the time for hauling aft the main sheet, they'd call to him to give them a chantey.

"Haul away, haul away, haul away the bowline," his young voice would sing, all along the pipe of the high sea-wind; the refrain coming from the deep throats of the sailors as from ten big bulls all bellowing together :

*"Haul away, haul away, haul away the bowline!
Haul on the bowline, haul! . . .*

*Haul away, haul away, may the devil take your
haulin'!*

Haul on the bowline, haul."

"W'istle," said Solomon the sea-cook; "w'istle fer a wind."

"I'm w'istlin'," said the boy; and, sure enough, whistling he was; whistling as blackbirds whistle when the little green apples begin to turn gold in June.

For days and days the big Tyne ship had lain, idle as a mushroom when the fairies have hastened home before the dawn, with all her sails clewed up to save them from chafing on the masts and rigging—a great black swan asleep upon the deep blue ocean; motionless, inert, upon a breathless sea; and the water in the tanks down below was running short.

"W'istle, sonny; w'istle," said the red-headed bosun.

"I am a-w'istlin', sir," said the boy, his cheeks puffed out; whistling as the drummer boys used to whistle when the drum-heads were broken in the good old days that were—when drums played the regiments to war.

The sun beat down upon the tall ship from the Tyne, scorching her long black sides, and blazing on her white decks until the pitch ran bubbling everywhere.

"W'istle, you little beggar; w'istle," said Tom Swift and Bloody Quayle, laying down their serving-boards and tar-pots and going forward for their hard-tack and salt pork: without enough water to wet it down with—for the big tanks down below were getting very, very low.

The little Welsh skipper from up by Anglesea came down from the bridge of his becalmed ship, and, walk-

ing forward to where upon the main hatch the boy sat, said:

"Whistle, m'lad. Whistle for all you're worth. Fetch us a wind and some rain to fill up the tanks."

"Yes, sir—I'm a-w'istlin', sir," said the boy; scarce stopping to say it.

Chips, the carpenter, came aft to the mizzen fife-rail, taking a sounding of the water-tanks below; shaking his head as he pulled the line up.

"Stooard," said the skipper, "you're goin' to have to cut the water down again.

"Aye, aye, sir. 'Ow much will I cut it, sir?" asked the steward.

"Three tablespoons apiece all around; but you be sure an' keep young Twinkle's w'istle wet."

"W'istle, sonny; for the love of Mike, *w'istle*; fetch us a bit of a breeze," said Solomon the sea-cook, who hadn't had water to make soup with now for a full week—since the steward cut the allowance three table-spoons all around.

"W'istle; for the love of Mike, w'istle," whispered Belayin'-Pin, the red-headed bosun.

"W'istle, w'istle, w'istle," said Tom Swift and Bloody Quayle, all of a breath; as they shied a belaying-pin apiece at a fat rat, who sat upon his haunches staring up at the boy.

The boy quit whistling.

"W'istle—hey, you little blighter, w'istle for the wind," cried every one anywhere near the lad.

"Please to not throw no more belayin'-pins nor nothin' at the rats. The rats is my friends," said young Twinkle-Bright.

The skipper on the bridge, hearing the lad's piping voice, blew his whistle for the mate.

"Mister, you tell all hands to come aft," he said; and when that order was obeyed, and Neilson, Skows, Lon, Tom and Bloody, Dane Yohanssen, Dicky Blunt the other ordinary seaman—who got nothing but kicks for being such a crooked little swab as he was—and every one else, were aft under the bridge head:

"Men," said the skipper, "if any one of you men so much as throw a crumb of hard-tack at the tail end of the smallest rat aboard this here packet— Well! You watch out for yourselves, that's all. Go forward."

The ship had lain so long becalmed that she was drying up, and becoming *too dry for her steel ribs to sweat any longer*: so that there were no longer little driblets of sweat for the rats to lick at when they grew thirsty.

"Whistle, my son—please to keep whistling," said the chief mate, watching the boy's puffed cheeks.

The boy had ceased to speak when they spoke to him; squatting cross-legged on the main hatch; rising sometimes to stretch his little legs, and without ceasing to whistle, dancing round and round upon the top of the hatch—while the stars peeped out from the big blue sky, winking at the bright eyes in the blue mirror below them.

"Mister, there's a hand in the fo'csle wot is gettin' awful low: wot with the 'eat an' wot with the thirst, sir," said Belaying-Pin one evening to the mate.

"Tell that there lad to keep a-whistling. Don't let him stop. Give him all the water he can swaller all the time; so's he can whistle for a wind," said the skipper; "but tell him not to whistle no *tunes* till arter the corpse is decent buried, sir"; for hands were start-

ing aft, carrying a stretcher upon which lay the first thirst-perished sailor.

They laid the canvas-shrouded form upon the quarter rail; gathering all about, staring at it; each wondering how it felt, or *whether* it felt, to be all stitched up in that fashion and laid upon the railing.

The skipper, searching for a book to read the burial from, found none; for the rats were everywhere, nibbling this and nibbling that, at paper, and at clothing, and at odds and ends of all sorts—but with the deep-sea knowledge of the sea-going rat never touching ropes or sails, or amberline or hause-line, or any other ship's gear.

The skipper, coming to the quarter-deck, with the hands all standing waiting, said what came to his mind of the burial words for such as die at sea; getting them a bit mixed, and scratching his head.

"Man that is born of woman," said he; "man that is born of woman—" and looked to the mate; but the mate was looking over the water and did not meet his eye.

"Man that is born of woman," said he, "has but a short time to live. He goes up like a main topmast staysail, and comes down like a flying jib."

He nodded to the men at the foot of the stretcher; and, tipping it, they let the sewed-up sailor glide softly to the face of the great blue mirror below; where he made a ring of ripples and a few breaking bubbles, and was gone—to old Mother Carey, and her man Davy Jones.

"Fill the little blighter full o' water. Keep him whistling. There's another hand that ain't goin' to last much longer if the wind don't come," said the red-headed bosun.

"Look at yon owld rat," whispered a man from the Geordie country, his lips all dry and cracking. "'E's piebald!"

Years and years ago that big black ship had carried a grain cargo out of Melbourne, and there the rats had come aboard her. Amongst them had been one white rat, suborned from a gentleman's home up in the high-brow part of town; and ever since then there had been piebald rats aboard her, sometimes one, sometimes two, sometimes a dozen, and now a whole unnumbered multitude.

"Stooard, you've got to dock the water allowance again," said the skipper.

"'Ow much will I dock it, sir?"

"Three tablespoons apiece all around: but be sure you keep young Twinkle's whistle wet."

There was no longer soup, or tea, or coffee; and as for brushing a man's teeth of a Saturday evening, as is the custom at sea, that was out of the question—unless a man used salt water; which, owing to thirst, couldn't be done.

The ship lay still and silent; a black swan drowsing by night and by day.

It was late of an evening when the hands were sitting silently about the hatch, their hands clasped round their knees, their heads bowed down, their lips dry and cracking, their throats as nutshells in November, that the bosun of the rats came on deck for a drink. They saw him pass them on his way from below the booby hatch, where he lived, to the carpenter's shop; where, just inside the door, Chips kept an old marmalade tin with his allowance of water in it.

The carpenter on a ship serves out the water allow-

ance each day; and *you* know what *that* means—that means *water for Chips*.

The bosun of the rats was a black rat; blacker than the best Welsh coal from the mines by Dean Forest; blacker than the hat the Pope of Rome wears to church upon a Spring-time Sunday; blacker than the wing of an old, old crow. He carried the end of his long tail twisted over his weather shoulder and walked with a roll in his gait; his two front paws upon his hips, and both eyes shining.

Going to the carpenter's shop, he wetted his whistle, smacking his lips a time or two, whisking his tail to weather and to lee; and, returning past the hatch, took a long look at the foremast hands sitting glum and thirst-perished; nodding to young Twinkle-Bright, who was whistling a topsail-halyard chantey tune.

The ship was upon the far edge of the doldrums, in a hopeless flat calm; but, just over the low rim of the southern horizon, the bosun of the rats knew well enough that the doldrum squalls were passing to and fro, drifting hither and yon—just under the dip of the sea-rim.

He stared hard along the decks; with all hands doomed for Mother Carey if something didn't happen soon; ne'er a man stirring; no one to strike the bell for the closing of the watches; no one to go to the wheel or to the lookout; only Solomon the sea-cook, sitting upright in his galley staring at his image in a shiny kettle.

"Solomon," muttered the old cook, "what good's pea-soup to you now, eh? Ah, you silly old swab!"

The carpenter, in his shop next door, heard him. The carpenter's lips were wet; and toward midnight

he got up to take another sip from the old marmalade can just inside the door. Reaching down for the can, he was aware of a scurrying crowd of rats that came and went in never ceasing numbers; striking a light, he held his lantern high; at the very moment when the sonorous tones of the ship's bell tolled out across the dark blue sea; echoing up and down, and in and out, and round about the deck-houses and hatchways.

Clang-clang, clang-clang, clang-clang, clang-clang.

Chips was struck all of a heap by the strange tones of the bell, as well as by the sight that met his eyes.

In and out, through his shop-door, came and went the rats, black, brown, gray, and piebald; every one with his eyes shiny bright and his tail tucked tight over his weather shoulder. He heard the snores of the hands upon the hatch, and the shrill whistle of Twinkle-Bright whistling as the mocking-bird whistles when the mulberries are turning purple toward the end of May. Going to the galley, he sat down at the side of Solomon.

"Sol, old son, who was it struck the forward bell?"

From his shop came the ripple of a thousand feet; but never the rustle of a rat-tail dragging on the floor; for they were, one and all, tucked over their owner's weather shoulders and out of the way—for there was work to be done before dawn came riding down the sky.

"I ain't never 'eard young Terwinkle v'stle that way before," said Chips.

Aft, upon the cabin skylight, sat the mate, and the second mate, and the skipper; and the steward with them; each fast asleep.

On deck the bosun of the rats was giving orders,

his eyes shining, his two front paws upon his hips, his tail upon his weather shoulder.

Far aloft there was a soft, long, rustling sound; as, the buntlines and the clewlines let go from deck, the big sails dropped along the spars. There was the long, loud groan of a dry tackle-block, and of another, and yet another; as, one by one, the sails were sheeted home by endless companies of rats.

Upon the main hatch Twinkle-Bright had quit his whistling; standing with his hands in his pockets, his hat cocked on one side, his lips parted; singing a chantey for the rats to pull by.

"Rouse a main-sheet chantey, Twinkly boy, so's these lubbers o' mine can pull; so they'll haul out the sheet together—let 'er go," said the bosun of the rats.

"Haul away, haul away; oh, we're hauling night an' mornin'," sang Twinkle-Bright at the very top of his voice.

"Squeak, you lubbers," shouted the bosun of the rats; and squeak they did; great and small, pied and black and brown; every last rat upon the sheets squeaking all together. Aft came the sheet of the fore-sail; down came the big white belly of the mainsail, and the cross-jack with it; the topsail sheets groaning above them.

The black Tyne ship lay then, for all the world as a black swan asleep with its wings lopped down; as though it had forgotten to fold them.

"Vot's a-goin' on on deck, do you suppose now, Sol?" asked Chips.

"Pea-soup, bean-soup—ah, wot good's canned tripe to you now, you silly old swab?" said Solomon the sea-cook, staring at his image in the shining kettle on the stove.

On deck the bosun of the rats was busy; running hither and thither; giving a kick here, and a cuff there; shouting:

"Lay back, you lubbers. Lay back, now—all together."

*"When I was young and in my prime
On a black Tyne ship I served my time,"*

sang Twinkle-Bright at the very top of his voice.

"That's it, Twinkly, m'lad. Sing," cried the bosun of the rats; and sing he did; singing till the courses and the lower topsails were sheeted home; every last one of the rats squeaking for the chorus of the chantey.

"Aloft, you lubbers, now—hop along. *Step lively,*" shouted the bosun.

Up went the rats; swarming into the shrouds, climbing, scurrying, scrambling for a good place upon the yards, or for a good footing along the foot of one or other of the sails. When they were all aloft, with their faces to the sails, hanging for dear life with all their toes, the bosun shouted—

"Now then, m'lads—all together—*blow.*"

And blow they did; whether black, brown, gray, or piebald; keeping their cheeks puffed out tight, and their eyes shut; hanging tight with their toes.

The bosun went to the topgallant rail, peering down at the still water alongside.

"Clang-clang, clang," three bells was struck, for one-thirty already upon the big forward bell, by an old piebald rat with broken toes who could not get aloft; so had stayed on deck to coil up the ropes and to strike the bell.

"Blow, you lubbers, blow now," shouted the bosun; and blow they did.

"Sing there, Twinkly, m'lad. Sing for 'em."
And sing he did.

*"A big black ship came down the river,
Blow, boys, blow.*

*A big black ship came down the river,
Blow, my bully boys, blow."*

"Wot's a-goin' on on deck now, do you suppose, Sol?" asked Chips in the galley.

"Pea-soup, bean-soup, cracker hash and dandy funk—ah, you silly old swab. What good'll they do you now, eh?" said Solomon to his reflection in the kettle on the stove.

The bosun saw the bubbles coming; his long tail twitching with excitement. The water was slowly slipping by.

From below the sea-rim a dark cloud was rising—doldrum squalls crossing the sky. The bosun sniffed; the rats up aloft stopping for one single second to sniff—all of them sniffing a rain far away. Across the deck, abaft the mizzenmast, stretched the rain-sail from side to side, as it had for week by week; waiting for the rain to fill the tanks down below.

The broken-toed rat went to the bosun.

"Bose," said he, "I'm goin' to the wheel. Send a couple o' dozen o' the boys to give me a hand, will you?"

"Twenty o' the biggest o' you lubbers to the wheel," shouted the bosun; and without waiting to come down the rigging two dozen big rats just dropped to the deck and scampered aft to the wheel; passing the skipper,

mates and steward without so much as staying to stare at them; grabbing the wheel-spokes they whirled the wheel around, laying the ship's head for the dark cloud hovering on the sea-rim.

Slowly, as a big black swan awakening from long dreaming, the Tyne ship stole through the water; her courses and her three lower topsails blown into by innumerable companies of rats.

The golden moon arose, peeping from under the sea-rim, spangles of glimmering gold seeming to fall from her as she rose toward the high sky; gleaming upon the tall masts of the Tyne ship; on her white courses and topsails, on Twinkle-Bright dancing round and round, his hands in his pockets, his feet going faster than the feet of Pat O'Halloran at a Wexford wake.

"Blow, you lubbers, blow. Keep a-blowin'," shouted the rat bosun.

All about young Twinkle-Bright the drowsy sailors slept, their heads bowed down; snoring as so many lob-eared China pigs; not a move amongst them all till Twinkle-Bright went and whispered in the weather ear of the rat bosun.

Off to the galley went the bosun of the rats, and over the doorstep he hopped; standing before Chips and Solomon, his front paws upon his hips, his tail cocked over his weather shoulder, his two eyes shining.

"Water," said he; "all the water you've got in them marmalade cans. Now hop along, you lubbers; hop along."

"A pan full o' hard-tack, a dollop o' pork slush, six fat cockroaches— Ah! There's the makin's of a fine cracker hash for Sunday dinner; an' wot good's it

ever a-goin' to do you now, you silly old swab?" said Solomon, staring at his image in the kettle.

"Water," said Chips. "Aye, aye, sir; water it is, sir. I'll go fetch it."

And off to his shop he went, to bring the old rusty marmalade can with a pint of water in its bottom.

For a minute Twinkle-Bright ceased his dancing and his singing; holding the rusty can to the lips of Tom and Bloody, sleeping side by side upon the hatch

"Sip, sip, sip," went the two of them; "sip, sip, sip," opening their eyes, and staring straight into the face of the swiftly rising moon.

"Bloody," whispered Tom, "if *I* was as ugly as wot *you* be, blast me if I wouldn't jump over the side an' say, ' 'Ere goes nobody,' blast me now if I wouldn't."

"Tom," said Bloody, "if *I* didn't 'ave no more sense than wot *you* 'ave, you boardin'-'ouse bum, you ring-tail cat from 'Tanarivo, I'd— Well! S'welp me! Wot the— Wot's a-goin' on aloft, Tom? Heh?"

Twinkle-Bright bent down, whispering into his old friends' ears; and, rising, the two of them went to the fo'csle; returning in an instant; Tom with his fiddle under his arm, and Bloody with the flute from Skows, the Norwegian's sea-chest between his lips.

"Blow, you lubbers, blow," cried the bosun of the rats to his people on the yards.

The round gold moon peered down upon the hatch of the black Tyne ship where sat the crew of drowsy, thirst-perishing sailors; and in the middle of them, his hands in his pockets, his hat cocked over one eye, Twinkle-Bright waiting for Tom and Bloody, who were tuning up the fiddle and the flute.

"Tee zee zing twee," went the fiddle-bow along the strings.

"Come along now, Bloody, you monkey-faced gazon," said Tom Swift.

"Come along now, you ring-tail cat from 'Tarnarivo—I'm wid ye," said Bloody Quayle; and away they went, fiddling and fluting as the first little sprinkle of a rain began to fall upon the parched decks of the black Tyne ship; and the first faint puff of a doldrum squall began to belly out the courses and the lower topsails.

"Light right astern, sir," shouted the broken-toed rat at the wheel; and, looking astern, the fiddler and the fluter saw, creeping slowly over the sea, a red and a green light; with, above them, towering to the stars, the courses, lower and upper topsails, lower and upper topgallants, royals, skysails, and moonsails of a lofty clipper ship. Never stopping their fiddling and their fluting, Tom and Bloody arose to their feet, gazing at the oncoming ship.

"Tim Murphy an' the old *Shenandoah*—that's who *that* be," sang out Tom Swift. "She's a-comin' down on us an' a-fetchin' the wind with 'er."

"On deck, you lubbers; on deck, an' sheet home all sail," shouted the bosun of the rats; and, never waiting to come down the rigging, every last rat dropped nimbly to the deck; running in thousands to the sheets and braces.

"Sing for 'em, Twinkles, m'lad," shouted the bosun of the rats; and sing for them he did; Tom fiddling to the tune of it, Bloody fluting to the tune of it; Twinkle-Bright's feet going round and round the hatch, his hat cocked half over one ear, his hands in his pockets.

"Vot you suppose is goin' on on deck?" asked Chips, sitting before the galley stove.

"Cracker hash, dandy funk, pea-soup, bean-soup, *coffee for all hands*—the rain's a-fallin'," said Solomon, arising and reaching for the big skilly pots. "You git out o' here, Mister Chips; I'm a-goin' to be busy."

Up got Chips, and, walking aft, put a hand upon the mate's shoulder; whispering in his ear—

"Rain in the rainsail, mister—the tanks is fillin' up."

Up got the mate, saying in the little Welsh skipper's ear—

"Rain in the rainsail, mister—the tanks is fillin' up."

Up got the little Welsh skipper, with his face turned aft over the moon-glimmered sea; where, stealing down upon the black Tyne ship, there came a lofty clipper with her high kites flying; her red and green side lights blinking as the eyes of a witch-wife of the sea.

"Rouse the hands. Look alive, mister mate. Hop along now—all hands to the sheets and braces."

"Go below, you lubbers; go below now," shouted the bosun of the rats; and in less than three and one half seconds devil a rat was there left on the white decks of that Tyne ship.

"Sheet home the upper topsails," roared the mate; "sheet home all," and under his breath he said to himself: "Who in thunder set them courses an' lower tops'ls? My, ain't I been a-dreamin' though?"

Neilson, Skows, Lon Yont, Dane Yohanssen, Dicky Blunt, the three foremast hands with names out of the Bible, the carpenter and steward, the sail-maker and second mate and the red-headed bosun were all

a-hauling and a-heaving on the sheets and braces; setting sail in a hurry, with the Yankee clipper coming up astern.

"Sing for 'em; sing, Twinkle-Bright," shouted the chief mate, and sing for them he did—

*"Haul away, haul away, haul away the bowline,
Haul on the bowline, haul."*

Everything was set; all hands standing with their hands cupped, catching the rain; Twinkle dancing up and down the hatch singing:

*"My gal's a high born ladee.
She's dark, but not too shadee;
Feathered like a peacock, just as gay;
She's not colored, she was born that way."*

The rain fell faster, the moon growing fainter, the wind in the white sails lifting the ship along.

On the topgallant rail stood Solomon the sea cook, waving a soup-ladle above his head; the carpenter staring from his shop-door; the steward, his white apron blowing round his neck, peering from a window.

Carrying all her high kites, the *Shenandoah* was alongside them, flying all her feathers to the doldrum squall; a lady, a lady with a foot for running on the ballroom floor; a big flag breaking at her rain-smothered peak by the faint light of the moon; a swirl of billows all about her bow; her hands crowding in her shrouds to watch the black Tyne ship.

"Give 'er three, bullies—three; *all together now.*"

The sailors of the Tyne ship gave her three; ringing over the rain-hidden, moon-glimmered sea; ring-

ing as the big winds ring, high in the topmast rigging—clear and loud.

In the *Shenandoah's* rigging stood the Yankee sailors, watching the pretty black clipper lifting to the rising swell.

"She's a fly-foot packet, boys. I bet she can run, eh?" said a sailor.

"Hark to 'em—they're giving us three. Look at the old gazabo on her topgallant rail—I'll bet that's old man Jonah come back to life again."

"Give them back their three, sons—three and another. Now—*all together*."

The Yankee sailors gave the Tyne ship three, roaring them across the sea; rain dripping from shroud and sail and backstay; voices echoing, and lost in the thickening squall; everything silver in the glimmer of the moon.

On the hatch of the Tyne ship stood young Twinkle-Bright, waving his hat; shouting at the top of his voice:

"Hoorah! Oh, hoorah! Ain't she pretty though?"

On the bridge of the black Tyne ship stood the mate beside the little Welsh skipper.

"He fetched us luck, mister," said the skipper, looking up at his mate.

"That's wot 'e did, sir," answered the mate, looking down at his skipper. "I've seen it afore."

I'VE BEEN DREAMIN'

I 'VE been dreamin',
Of a randy, dandy clipper with her tops'ls set,
Pitchin' heavy down the westing with the leeches
wet.

Billy Newland, the old skipper, from his high bridge
head,

Shoutin' to us packet rats—an' these the words he said:
"Hop along, now! Loose them 'gallants! Skip
aloft, now! Jump along!"

Oh, them packet rats were swearin' an' a-breakin' into
song!

Packet rats a-roarin', "Ranzo," rats a-singing', "Roll
an' Go,"

Haulin' on them 'gallant braces, cryin', "Blow, boys,
blow!"

Let her blow for 'Frisco city!

Let the dandy clipper race!

For the swingin' feet an' pretty

Of the gals at Tony's place.

Soon we'll see old Tony smilin',

Hear his gals begin to sing,

Hear old Billy Dick beguillin'

Music from a fiddle-string!

Oh, there's drowned an' perished clippers

An' there's rats that died—

But there's gals wi' flowered slippers
An' their skirts flung wide!

Did you say there ain't no clippers? Did you say
them days is done?

Days of packet rats an' packets, an' stars an' moon
an' sun?

O' lights upon the water, a-shinin' on the sea?

My God, but *I'm* a packet rat!

What will become of me?

I've got to see tall clippers, I've got to sing an' shout
When the 'gallants are mastheaded and the jibs are
runnin' out.

I've got to roar of "Ranzo," an' "Blow, my bullies,
blow!"

When the ice-cakes heap a-cracklin', an' the Horn is
lost in snow.

I wants them lights by 'Frisco, an' lights by Salem too,
And dandy skippers swearin' at the signin' of the
crew.

Red Jacket's gone? And *Dancin' Wave?* *Guidin'*
Star as well?

Then what of *Golden Era?* . . . God help me! This
is hell!

Good-by, farewell, kedge anchor! The shoals lie deep
about;

The packet rats are singin', an' their chorus dyin'
out.

The clippers lie a-westin' where the westin' sun burns
red,

An' the packet rats are restin' in the havens of the
dead.

Good-by to Dame Romancing an' her dainty feathered
frock!

Good-by to all the laughter at the swingin' of the lock!

Good-by to capstan payments, good-by to ships at sea—

If the packets rest a-westin'—ah—westin' 's right for
me!

TIME COMES

THE sun of morning, bright on the water of Barnstaple Bay, shone on the decks of a brig, on her tall masts and tapered spars, her flying-boom, and the dark oiled wood-work of her teak wheel-box and chart-house. At her foretruck Blue Peter fluttered, at her main a long crimson pennant bearing her name in white lettering; the crimson and white of flag and lettering flicked and fluttered in the morning breeze. Her hull was black, her boats black, her unpainted masts and yards dark with many oilings; her name, below her counter and upon either bow in dull red lettering scarce distinguishable save close at hand. Her canvas, snugly stowed upon the yards, was brown.

Beneath her boom her figurehead stared over the water—a woman with a disdainful face, black-haired and muffled to the throat in a magenta gown; a pendant, hanging from each ear, heavy with imitation pearls of glass. The glass pearls were the only thing about the brig that shone, even in the light of morning. They alone reflected and flashed back the light.

Her crew thronged the bar of a tavern at the water-side, carousing, swallowing the last drinks before joining the ship; toasting the tavernmaster and his wife, one another, and the names of comrades lost upon the windy sea. They were men with brown faces, square-shouldered, hard-handed; some smooth-shaven, some

hairy as old apes—the latter drinking moodily, in silence; the former laughing, shouting the names of girls, swearing at the sea and the luck that sent them seaward.

“Luck to the *Lady Anna*,” cried a young sailor, raising his glass, looking round the company in the bar-room of the tavern “Lowlands Away-oh!”

“To hell to your bloody *Anna*,” replied a yellow-faced man, the bosun of the brig; a short, squat fellow, with a thin white scar upon his left cheek; sand-paper-skinned, mottle-marked—a thin-eyed, claw-fingered fellow with a faded red skull-cap upon his head; a patched shirt of the same color; his pants stuffed into thigh boots; a hand upon the sheath knife at the back of his belt, an elbow resting on the bar.

A laugh rang round the room as he spoke; men holding glasses and mugs half-way to their lips.

“To clear your dirty eyes, old mud-mind,” cried the young sailor, flinging his glass of red wine full in the other’s face.

A laugh yet louder rang about the barroom of the Lowlands Away-oh; the tavern-master vaulted the bar, seizing the arms of the mottle-marked man, holding him back; grasping the hand that held the long sheath knife, saying—

“Steady now, lads—let’s keep the peace now.”

The woman behind the bar, the wife of the tavern-master, leaning toward the young sailor, spoke to him; smiling as he approached; scowling as he turned his back upon her.

The mottle-marked man, wriggling free of the tavernmaster’s grip, stared hard at the other.

“Time comes,” he muttered inaudibly; biting his lip; and, going to the bar, leaned upon it.

"Fill up," he said; nodding to the company to get their glasses filled.

The woman behind the bar approached him, whispering, smiling, her eyes down-drooped, her face snaky; her skin strangely white amongst the sea-browned sailors. Leaning over the bar, the mottle-marked man flung an arm about her neck, a short neck set close upon white shoulders, and, drawing her toward him, kissed her upon the mouth.

A laugh still louder rang around the tavern; the tavernmaster scowling at the mottle-marked man, swearing at him for an impudent devil; the woman, her eyes flashing, not all in anger, unconsciously licking her lips—as though a snake had swallowed a fat rat—her hair, disheveled, hanging about her shoulders.

"Drink hearty, mates," said the mottle-marked man, looking from shaggy brows toward the young sailor.

They raised their glasses, tossing the wine down; swallowing long gulps of the brown Jamaica; wiping their mustaches, they strolled to the tavern door, hitching their pants, crying back:

"Come on, boys—let's go aboard now," and—

"Good-by, Mistress Mallory—good luck to you,"
or—

"We'll fetch a string o' pearls when we come back again, Mistress Mallory."

Mistress Mallory, calling the young sailor, beckoned him to her; speaking low, as if trying to make some bargain; the sailor ignoring her, and going toward the tavern door. They sauntered off, talking noisily, lighting pipes; cutting slices from plugs of black tobacco which they rolled between their palms. The mottle-marked man, at the bar, draining his mug to the dregs, turning, beckoned to the tavernmaster's wife; and,

reaching over the bar as she approached him, seizing her arm, dragged her toward him, kissing her mouth again. She drew away, pretending anger at his impudence, without a flush on her cheek. The tavernmaster, coming up as the man, letting her go, made off after the others, spoke angrily to her; snapping as a savage dog.

"Oh, you poor fool," she answered, staring into his face, "can't you let well be well?—d'ye think I can't fish pearls from the sea?"

The sailors gathered at the brig's boat.

"They says she's bound for Pearl Island—comin' home again wi' a cargo o' pearls," said one.

"Aye—that's what they say. A full cargo o' pearls," said another.

From the tavern behind them a song was wafted to the waterside; a couple of loiterers singing, and the voice of Mistress Mallory joining them—

*Lowlands, Lowlands,
Lowlands away-oh,
Heave, oh, heave, oh—hauling away-oh,
Lowlands away-oh.*

The tavernmaster and the bottle-boy stood in the door to watch them pull off; the woman looking from an upper window, her neck open, its whiteness distinct in the morning light; her kerchief waving to the departing men.

"We'll fetch you them pearls, mistress," cried a sailor, thrusting his oar through the ro'lock.

The mottle-marked man, climbing the Jacob's ladder, dropped nimbly upon the brig's deck.

"Bosun," said the mate, addressing him, "get the

hands forrard; get the anchor in—lively does it, now.”

They hoisted the boat to her place upon the skids, lashing her down; and went forward to man the windlass.

“Walk her down, now—lively does it,” ordered the bosun, staring at the Lowlands Away-oh; biting the ends of his mustache.

The sailors stamped around the windlass, the pawls clanking, the cable rattling through the hawse-pipe; one of them singing an outbound chantey:

“Oh, it’s blow, an’ it’s blow,

Blow, bullies, blow,

Oh, it’s blow, an’ it’s blow,

Blow, bullies, blow.

There’s rum, an’ there’s sugar, an’ pearls down below,

Blow, blow, blow, bullies, blow.”

The brig took the wind abeam, careening a little; men swarming along her topsail yards to loosen sail.

“Haul that there pennant down, an’ that Peter off the fore,” cried the mate; and down came the flags all a-flutter. The ship stood away to round the point, a long white bone at her forefoot; her stern lifting a little—her railings rolling slowly to the easy swell.

From the upper window of the Lowlands Away-oh a white kerchief waved; Mistress Mallory bidding ship and sailors good-by. The tavernmaster behind the bar counted his gains; the bottle-boy, washing the glasses and mugs, stopping to tweak the tail of the yellow tom-cat curled in the window, looking through the twinkly panes to where the brig creamed the sea beneath her fast feet—the morning sun upon her brown topsails, the wind bellying her topgallants.

"I wonder if they'll bring me those pearls," thought Mistress Mallory, staring into her eyes in the long mirror; picturing pearl earrings in her ears; a pearl necklace about her white neck.

"A few more bits o' gold an' I'll sell the Lowlands Away-oh an' quit business—Judy—hey, Judy," called the tavernmaster; and going to the foot of the stairway he shouted up it—

"How'd you like to be a *fine* lady, Judy, wife, hey?"

"I'm a-goin' to them there pearl islands too, when I'm growed a bit more," said the bottle-boy to himself, swallowing the last drop of Jamaica from a pewter mug to make him grow.

The yellow tomcat twitched his tail, thrusting out his claws—as if dreaming of revenge upon the bottle-boy and other foes.

The skipper of the brig *Lady Anna* sat with his mate at the cabin table:

"Forty bales of crimson cloth below. Forty wooden buckets of glass beads; and rubbish enough to buy the half of Africa," said he.

The mate nodded his head.

"Zanzibar for ivory—black and white both; and after that about the Cape to Jamaica for a 'tween-decks full of rum; maybe a hundred sacks of sugar into the bargain. Black ivory's good trading, mister," said the skipper.

"So I've heard tell, sir. That's what I've heard," said the mate.

"Get her best canvas aloft, mister. I ain't going to lay-to for no man-o'-war's man. The *Lady Anna's* a fly-foot packet," said the skipper.

"I've got her storm suit aloft, sir," said the mate.

"Keep it so," said the skipper, "and crack her along under all she'll carry day and night. I'm going to Zanzibar for ivory."

The mate nodded his head.

The skipper rose to leave the cabin, and, turning about in the doorway, said—

"There'll be pearls enough to give the *Lady Anna* under the bow a change for fancier earrings, mister."

Forward, the hands sat in the fo'c'sle; four of them with the cards, the others looking over their shoulders. The mottle-marked man, the brig's bosun, put his head through a port.

"You," he said, addressing the young sailor who had thrown the wine in his face that morning, "skip aloft an' loose that fore royal—lively does it, now"; and to the others: "Stand by to hoist away. Time for play later."

"Time comes," he muttered to himself.

The sailors, leaving the fo'c'sle, gathered at the hal-yards ready to hoist the sail; and, hearing a voice from aloft call, "All clear," ran the royal to the masthead, the sail a shadow dim against the stars.

"Get to that yard," bellowed the bosun to the man aloft. "Overhaul them buntlines."

The sailors returned to the fo'c'sle; the bosun, standing alone upon the deck, staring at the shadow of the royal against the stars, watching the young sailor climbing to the hoisted yard, and laying out to overhaul the buntlines. When the sailor was on the lee yard the mottle-marked bosun, going to the weather royal brace, lifted it from its pin, and, staring aloft, let the brace go slack with a quick jerk. From aloft there was a faint cry; a shape falling from the royal

yard, hurtling toward the racing water alongside the brig.

A hand to his ear, the mottle-marked man, listening to the sounds of the night, replaced the royal brace upon its pin. The silence was unbroken save for the lap of the hidden sea and the murmur of the wind in the shrouds.

"That's that," muttered the mottle-marked man to himself, as, going slowly aft, he waited till the mate and skipper should come up from their suppers that he might go below for his.

"Time comes," he muttered, pulling his long mustache.

Eight bells was struck by and by; the hands mustering below the bridge to answer to their names.

"Murray."

"Here, sir."

"Watkin."

"'Ere."

"Rinker."

"Here, sir."

"Blake—where's Blake?"

No reply.

"One o' you go fetch that lubber aft. What does he think this is, hey?" shouted the mate, calling the tally of the sailors.

"He's had too much o' that damned rum," said the mate to himself.

"What do you suppose is come o' that young fellow Blake, mister?" asked the mottle-marked man of the mate, upon the bridge, when the watches were set.

"Too much rum—gone overboard to Davy," said the mate.

"That's what I says too, sir—too much rum, an'

gone overboard to Davy," said the mottle-marked bosun of the brig *Lady Anna*.

Off the Zanzibar coast lay the brig *Lady Anna*; twenty pair of elephant ivories in her lower hold resting upon sacks of spice and coffee and balls of raw rubber. On her deck the Portugee and Arab traders mingled, watching the slings bring up bales of cloth and headed wooden buckets full of glass beads.

"Rubbish enough to buy the half of Africa," said the skipper of the *Lady Anna*, hitting Jake Camacho, the Portugee, a crack between his fat shoulders.

Jake grinned.

"Ven zee vind 'ee coom oop, zen I breeng you zee ivory," said he.

"You bring 'em quick, my lad, see? I ain't wantin' to cut an' run for no man-o'-war's man," said the skipper of the brig.

"I breeng you t'irty ivories—an, ze nice leedle ivory, meester captain," said Jake Camacho.

As dusk fell, the Arab and Portugee traders went over the side; the sailors clearing up the brig's decks at the end of the day's trading.

Over the shore-line to the westward the sky was a dying flame, blood-colored, and smoky with the village fires; flecked with changing lights of turquoise and gold, breathless; smoldering above the musky jungles. Seaward the horizon glimmered, as if a lamp, just lighted, hung behind thick curtains; a glow of cold silver widening above the sea's edge.

Upon the railing of the brig sat the mottle-marked man, keeping the tally; his faded red cap upon his head, the sleeves of his red shirt rolled to his huge elbows, baring ape-like arms; his legs dangling in big

boots; his thin eyes peering at the terror-dumb blacks who, chained together, came over the railing; men with dark stains upon their backs and shoulders; women carrying babies; girls hiding their faces.

"One, two, three, four, five," counted the mottle-marked man; a mark on the page of the tally-book at the count of five.

"One, two, three, four, five," and another mark on the page of the tally-book.

"One, two, three, four, five," and one more mark on the page of the tally-book.

"Keep the tally o' the bucks apart, you mug-faced lubber, you," said the mate to the tally-man, peering at the tally-page.

"Aye, aye, mister—that's what I'm a-doin'," said the mottle-marked man.

"Time comes," he muttered to himself as the skipper, leaning over the bridge-rail, beckoned to his mate.

"Is them new topgallants aloft, nister? Is them topgallant masts well greased? Is them backstays overhauled? We're maybe goin' to have to cut an' run for it," said the skipper of the *Lady Anna*.

"One, two, three, four, five," counted the tally-man upon the railing.

The skipper called the mate to the bridge.

"There's a Manaar pearler coming in for coast trading. I heard them Arabs a-talkin' to Jake. We'll keep lookout for her, mister. I'll trade ahead of that fat Jake. I'll steal his pearls. Keep that hand in the fore crosstrees an' see he keeps a bright lookout. I'll trade for them pearls from Manaar. Joe Rufio's always ready for a pretty nigger gal."

"Aye, aye, sir. I'll tell it to the bosun," said the mate. "D'you reckon that there'll be a man-o'-war out-

side, sir? D'you reckon that maybe we'll have to make a run for it?"

"Get them topgallant masts well greased, an' get all clear for running—in case that should be so, sir," said the skipper.

"One, two, three—an' that's the lot," counted the tally-man upon the railing; making a last mark upon the tally-book. "'Ere you are, mister mate; 'ere's the tally all-sir-garney-oh—eight and twenty ivories not countin' the kids. *They'll* kick off when she picks up the swell an' starts a-rollin'. I ain't counted *them*."

"Mister mate," called the skipper from the bridge, "have the hands heave in, sir. There's a bit of a breeze blowin' up, an' I'm a-goin' to run off shore—keepin' a lookout for the pearler. Lively does it, now."

The *Lady Anna*, a freshening breeze off-shore, took the bit between her teeth and ran for the sea; her wide topgallants bellied, her courses high-lifted; the sea in her wake creaming with emerald and sapphire; petrels circling over the water astern; the western sea as old blood, dull crimson turning to black; the eastern sky as lantern-lit opals; deep shadows above the sea's edge, where clouds hung.

"Umph," said the skipper on the bridge. "Where's that Manaar pearler got to now, eh?"

"There's a light astern, sir—a glimmer like from a ship's binnacle, no more, sir. A twinkle lost, an' showin' now an' again, sir," said the mate.

The skipper of the slaver peered astern, over the dark sea, where petrels flew unseen, and where emeralds and sapphires were lost in the deeps of night.

"Loose all sail. Drive her to it," said the skipper. "Yon's a man-o'-war's man with his lights blinked."

They gave her sail; sweating the topgallants tight, and the royals above them; setting spanker and gaff topsail, monkey gaff, bull-whanger, and all fore-and-afters. She ran—as a woman, racing homeward from a tryst, treading down the primroses. Impatient of the sea hollows, she lifted above them as one who leaps to gaze beyond a hedge-row upon a hill's crest; the sea singing strange music about her; its gems lost in the deeps of night.

In the hold of the slaver crouched blacks from a ravaged village; their eyes deep with the dread of a god not understood; their souls sick; women holding babies to their breasts and soothing them with soft words; mumbling of a heathen god who would bring them safe to some road's ending.

"Umph," said the skipper on his bridge. "I reckon that there man-o'-war's man is a-goin' to fall astern."

From forward came the voice of a sailor, who, as he stuffed his pipe, sang:

"Blow, bullies, blow;

Blow, bullies, blow.

Sugar an' rum an' pearls down below."

Astern a flash of flame showed for an instant, followed by the dull rumble of a cannon-shot.

"Umph," said the skipper on his bridge, "I reckon that that there man-o'-war's man is a-gettin' desp'rit. He's takin' a chance shot at the whole o' the night."

"That's the last we'll see o' him. He's takin' a chance shot just for the luck of it," said he to his mate.

There was the sudden sound of splintered wood, a crash upon the main deck of the low, reeling slaver; her lee rail down in the sea—the man-o'-war's man's

ball ripping a great hole just to the lee of the hatch coaming.

In the hold the blacks trembled, numb with terror, splattered with bright blotches of blood; blood dripping from the beams, dribbling from the stringers.

The skipper and the mate stood upon the poop, staring astern.

"Good for us he didn't fire many o' them sort o' shots," said the skipper.

The night was blowing up, the sea roaring, the sky cloud-hidden; silver spangles on the water, beneath a break where the moon shone through.

"Square away a point, mister; an' take them royals off," said the skipper.

The voices of men mingled with the uproar of the sea and the groan of blacks.

"Mister," said the mottle-marked man, pointing to the weather bow, "yonder's a light a-shinin'."

"Captain," said the mate, going to the bridge, "look over yonder, sir."

"The Manaar pearler! Mainsail up and topgallants down. Square that yard. I'm going to trade with Joe Rufio. I'm going to beat fat Jake for his pearls," said the skipper of the brig *Lady Anna*.

Far down the night there was a twinkling light, now lost in the hollows, now high-lifted on the ridges.

They backed the main yard of the brig; lowering her topgallants away, and hauling her mainsail up; the vessel lifting lazily, awaiting the coming of the swiftly approaching pearler.

"Get a man forrard to signal her with a lantern. We daren't show a flare. That man-o'-war's man might see," said the skipper.

Upon the end of the flying boom, a lantern swinging

to and fro and up and down in his hand, sat the mottle-marked man; his legs dangling above the sea; the lantern-light upon his face, his red skull-cap, his wide-open throat and stained mustaches.

From the pearler came an answering light; a pale-green flame illuminating the sea around her.

"Curse! She's showing a flare! That man-o'-war's man's gone, I reckon. We'll make the trade quick an' run for it," said the skipper of the brig.

"Bosun," called the mate from the fo'csle head to the signaler upon the boom end, "get them hatches off. Skipper's going trading with Rufio. Fetch up some ivory. Lively does it, now. You know Rufio's liking."

Down the hatchway went the bosun, the lantern, in his hand, upheld above him.

"A lot o' dead perished niggers," said he, and cried to the deck above:

"Below here, a couple o' you swabs. Pass them corpses up. Lively does it. Throw 'em over the side."

The dead and dying were passed to the darkness of the night above; dim shapes dragged across the deck and flung to the lifting waters—gain for the sharp-finned sharks awaiting what the night might bring them.

Wind-drifted over the sea came the groan of a tackle-block, the rattle of sheets, mingled with the sound of voices, as the pearler lay to on the brig's weather bow.

"Ahoy, ahoy," cried a voice across the water.

"Ahoy, yourself—this is Joe Rufio. What have ye got?"

Forward, aboard the *Lady Anna*, a sailor was singing:

*"Blow, bullies, blow;
Blow, bullies, blow.
Sugar an' rum an' pearls down below."*

"What have ye for trade?" cried the voice of Joe Rufio.

"What'll ye have?" came the answer over the sea between.

"White gals for choice—failin' that black'll do," shouted a voice from the pearler's bow.

"Down, damn you, you lubber," shouted the pearler's captain.

He boarded the *Lady Anna*, going to the cabin for a long swallow of Jamaica; a canvas sack in his hand, its lanyard fast to his belt.

"What of the banks?" asked the skipper of the brig.

Rufio opened the little sack, freeing the lanyard; tipping the sack over the table; spilling pearls, both black and white; his fingers gathering them into a little heap before him.

"That from the banks," said he. "What for trade?"

"Mister mate, go get them ivories along; them fancy ones; them pretty ones; lively does it now, mister," said the skipper of the brig.

The mate met the mottle-marked man at the hatch coaming.

"Them's the ones," said he; "them's Rufio's sort. Fetch 'em along."

"Ah; that's that, dearie," said Rufio, rising as the bosun entered the cabin and tilting the chin of the foremost of three young girls that he might look into her face.

From the poop above them a voice called down the open skylight—

“Sail comin’ up, sir.”

“Trade even for the sack,” cried the skipper of the *Lady Anna*.

“Even it is,” said Rufio, tossing the little sack upon the table; seizing the rope from the bosun’s hand and hastening to the quarter-deck; dragging the slave girls with him.

The schooner lay, drifted to a biscuit-toss, on the brig’s lee bow. Rufio, shouting to his crew to stand by, called to one of the rowers, and together they lowered the girls to the waiting boat; leaping after them, Rufio grasped the yoke-ropes, shouting—

“Give way—lay back.”

In a moment the topsails of the pearling-schooner rose above the sea; flitting as the wings of a frightened night bird along the wind—the moon, peeping through a cloud-rift, bright upon the white canvas; a high-thrown billow tossed to snow about her bow.

“Yards up—all sail. Lively now,” shouted the skipper of the slaver, hurrying to his bridge, Rufio’s sack in his hand, as the schooner captain left his cabin.

They gave her sail; sheeting home the main course, racing the topgallants and royals to the mastheads; running the fore-and-afters up; the *Lady Anna* careening far over, gathering way; seas boarding her waist; sprays flashing above her fo’c’sle head; opals and emeralds of the sea whirling in the moon-glimmer below her counter.

“Tell the bosun to clear them ’tween-decks—lively does it!” shouted the skipper when the brig, with all sail crowded, was snorting through the sea.

“I’ll take no chances—even if I *can* run away from

him. I'll take no chances o' bein' caught wi' black ivories in my hold. Over they goes—an' mister man-o'-war's man can stop to pick 'em up if 'e will! 'E'll never catch the *Anna*—*she* ain't built that way," he muttered to himself.

Down the hatch leaped the mottle-marked man; a lantern in one hand, the other on the long sheath-knife at the back of his belt.

Cries arose from the 'tween-decks hold of the swift brig, mingling with the uproar of the weather; cloud-banks, scudding over the moon's face, darkening the sea, casting black shadows along the *Lady Anna's* decks. Sailors, reaching downward from the hatch coaming, seized on struggling figures, jerked them upward.

"The ol' man must be thinkin' as that there frigate the coasters calls the *Catch-Dolphin* is somew'ere 'ere-about. 'E showed t'other 'is 'eels quick enough—I reckons 'e ain't a-takin' no chances on dark nights," said a sailor.

Below, in the flicker of the lantern-light, a thin-eyed man in a red skull-cap, his sleeves rolled to the elbow, his legs in great thigh boots, moved relentlessly to and fro, a shining blade in one hand; grunting now and again as he went about his work.

Figures disappeared over the deep-dipped lee railing of the flying slaver; smothered cries, arising from the sea, quickly lost; the cloud-banks heavy over the moon's face; the brig's decks in gloom, dashed by ceaseless sprays; her sides trembling to the pounding of the windward seas. All sail set, straining to the rising wind, she made away along the furrows with no sound of gear or outcry of sheet or halyard; silence, save for the whine of the wind and the roll of the

sea, falling upon her decks as the hatches were put on and battened down.

When morning came the skipper of the *Lady Anna* counted his pearls; emptying Rufio's sack upon the table.

"An' now," said he, "we'll lay for Port Royal an' stock that 'tween-decks with rum an' sugar for Bristol port."

On a misty April day the *Lady Anna* stole into the Bristol Channel; Lundy Island on her port beam, the Barnstaple shore scarce visible to starboard; the sun glowing warmly now and again on her brown topsails; but death on her decks.

Sailors, gathered at the rail, stared shoreward; men with loose teeth, and eyes as the eyes of death; their feet shambling, no tunes to their voices.

"Bosun," said the mate, "get the anchor clear. Wind's falling."

The bosun took the scurvy-ridden sailors to the fo'csle head to clear away the anchor, lest the wind, falling, leave them at the tide's mercy.

"I'll take the wheel, bouse," said the mate. "That'll give you one more man."

The brig crept past Lundy; thick fog, driving in from the sea, shrouding her decks, hid the shoreline, and her mastheads from deck.

In her cabin, his head nodding above the teak table, sat the skipper, counting pearls from Manaar; lifting them from a little canvas sack; filtering them through his fingers.

"One, two, three, four, five."

The cabin door was softly opened, a face peering in; the face of a man who wore a dull-red skull-cap, his

sleeves rolled to the elbows; his legs tucked into big thigh boots—a grin, hungry, wrinkling thin lips below a grizzled mustache.

A cry, stifled, a hand upon the lips of the crier, arose; the skipper falling forward, his face amongst the pearls of Manaar; pearls in his closing eyes.

In the cabin of the *Lady Anna*, a mottle-marked man counted pearls; while above him, on the poop, the mate stood in the wet fog; peering at the compass card; the sailors on the fo'csle head staring, scurvy-ridden, toward the lost shore. Rising from the table, he peered into the cabins encircling the saloon; grinning down upon the steward; holding up a string of pearls before the eyes of a dying man; the thin light from an open port falling upon them, as upon the old dis-tempered fellow who perished now upon the door-sill of home.

“One, two, three,” he counted, fingering the pearls; the steward taking no notice of him or of them; dying without a gasp at the count of three, a rattle in his throat.

Closing the door, the mottle-marked man stepped to the quarter-deck; walking forward to the fo'csle head, where, the fish-tackle in their hands, the sailors sang in raspy voices:

“Blow, bullies, blow;

Blow, bullies, blow.

Sugar an' rum an' pearls down below.”

“What's come o' the skipper, now, do you suppose? I ain't seed him of late,” said the mottle-marked man.

“Belay that fish-ball,” said he; “stand by”; and,

going from the fo'csle head, he walked aft, ascending the accommodation ladder to the poop.

There was no wind, the brig lying becalmed, drifting with the tide; the sails limp on her yards. Going to the wheel, he spoke to the mate.

"What do you suppose, now, has come of the skipper? I ain't seed him of late," said he.

The mate looked along the deck, aloft at the hidden spars, into the chart-house port before him.

"What's come of him, now, do you suppose?" asked the bosun of the brig *Lady Anna*.

"It's got him, maybe," said the mate.

The bosun leaned over the taffrail, staring down at the brown waters of the channel; and, turning, the mate spoke to him.

"Come, an' let's go look for the skipper," he said, letting go of the wheel-spokes.

They went together to the chart-house, and, coming out, descended to the quarter-deck; entering the cabin, the bosun first.

"Quiet, an' it's pearls. Noise, an' it's this," said the bosun; a knife in one hand at the throat of the mate; pearls in the other extended toward him.

The eyes of the mate were fixed upon the pearls, and, motioning the knife away, he took them from the bosun's extended palm.

"One, two, three, four, five," he counted.

Together they lifted the skipper; gathering up the pearls upon which his face had rested; carrying him, unseen, to the quarter railing, and dropping him gently to the sea; the shore hidden in the fog.

The wind was gone, the calm absolute now, the tide carrying the *Lady Anna* upon it, lifeless as a leaf upon a stream; her canvas and rigging adrip with the

mists; her sailors, from the fo'csle head, staring shoreward, eager for a taste of green things to heal their scurvy-ridden bodies.

Night fell; fog on the sea; the ship motionless; no sound reaching her, no lap of wave or groan of tackle-block to break the silence.

At the cabin table sat the mate and the bosun, talking in low tones; their heads nodding, their eyes as the eyes of snakes.

"She'll pile ashore afore mornin' like as not. No wind, an' tide-rips running," said the mate.

"We'd better take the gig an' leave her. Who'll know it?" said the bosun.

They arose, going silent-footed to the deck; unlacing the gig's cover; freeing the falls; lifting her from the chocks, and swinging her outboard. Taking the hand lead, they sounded for bottom as they pulled from the brig.

"No wind. Tide'll carry us in," said the mate.

They sat, hidden from each other, in the dense fog of evening; the sound of the sea upon the coast to the southward just audible; the mottle-marked man in the stern sheets, a hand on the gunwale, a hand on the long sheath knife at the back of his belt. Hunched on a thwart amidships, his back to the other, sat the mate, peering down into his upturned palm; fingering pearls with the forefinger of his other hand, counting aloud, very softly, to himself:

"One, two, three, four, five;

One, two, three, four——"

And a loud grunt at the count of four; the counter falling forward to the bottom of the boat, gurgling—as when a cow bogs deeper and deeper in the soft peat.

There was silence, broken presently by the sound of a soft splash; the brown water bubbling. Then, in the fog a voice that muttered—

“One, two, three, four, five.”

The mottle-marked man was gathering pearls from the bottom of the boat.

Hearing the lap of the sea, the wash of waves near to him, the bosun of the *Lady Anna* took the oars, and, thrusting them through the ro’locks, pulled toward the sound of lapping water; and, running presently aground, leaped ashore.

Tightening his belt, he stooped to wipe his sheath knife six times up and down in the wet sand, replacing it within its sheath.

A draft of air fanned his face—the first breath of an approaching wind; a moan, as of coming storm, sounding far off through the sea fog.

At dawn of a windy morning, mists driving swiftly up-channel, wreckers were busy along the sands of Barnstaple Bay; three men gathering booty from the remnant of a vessel that had pounded to pieces during the night; timbers scattered along the foreshore, planks, caught here and there amongst the jagged rock fringes, swinging to and fro as the sea struck them. The tide was out, the shore fringed with seaweed and fragments of the wreck; here and there a barrel showing its bilge from the weeds and the sand.

On the teeth of a sharp rock, caught in a crevice between high and low water, hung the figurehead of the wreck—a woman with a disdainful face; dark-haired, and muffled to the throat in a magenta gown; the gown stained with the wear and the wash of the sea.

Pendants hung from her ears; great glass beads that had somehow escaped the smashing of the shoreward-running surges.

A man, seeking amongst the strewn wreckage, gave orders to the three; bidding them break out the sand-buried barrels and load them upon a two-wheeled cart. His hands were deep in his breeches pockets, his lips pursed, whistling a tune:

"Blow, bullies, blow;

Blow, bullies, blow.

Sugar an' rum an' pearls down below."

"When I sell out this little lot—ah!" said he to himself; watching his men dig free a barrel of Jamaica from the wet sands.

The men loaded the cart; stowing the barrels of rum upon it until it could hold no more; turning on the wheel-spokes while the horse strained to start; pushing behind till the cart was on a rough, deep-rutted roadway; the sound of horse-hoofs and the rumble of wheels drowned in the roar of the weather. Behind the cart walked the tavernmaster, his hands deep in his pockets, his lips pursed, whistling the tune of the sugar and rum and pearls.

"When you've got this little lot unloaded," said he, "you go fetch that figurehead from off yonder rocks. I'm going to set her up at my door. Maybe I'll be giving her a new pair of earrings."

Before the sky had paled for dawn a man, standing close under the windows of the tavern Lowlands Away-oh, listened intently; his head bowed low, a hand upon the back of his belt. As he stood there, hidden in

the fog and the dusk, the door of the tavern was opened and men went forth into the weather, closing the door behind them.

When they were well away he bent down, and, gathering a handful of pebbles, tossed some of them lightly against an upper window. The window opened, slowly, a little way, and a woman's voice called down softly from behind thick red curtains—

"Who is it?"

"*H-s-s-s-s-t*," said the man below.

"Who is it?" whispered the voice from behind the red curtains.

"*H-s-s-s-s-t*—pearls come in from sea," said the man.

"*S-s-s-s-t*—I'll come down and let you in," said the voice from above.

The door opening a little, a feeble ray of light shone out into the mists upon a man who wore a red skull-cap, his throat wide to the weather, his legs in thigh boots; one hand behind his back, the other holding fast a little canvas sack.

The woman looked hard at him.

"*S-s-s-s-t*," she said, and motioned him to enter.

After closing the door behind him and seeing that the window shutters were fast closed, she turned the lamp low; then, looking fixedly at him from shining eyes, her neck very white above her long gown, her hair bound in a twist upon her head, bade him be seated.

The mottle-marked man approached as if to embrace her; the woman drawing away.

"Not now," she whispered. "Time comes."

"Aye—that's it. Time comes," he said, looking at her bright eyes.

"See here," he continued, "lookee," and tilted the

little sack upon the table; the woman's eyes glowing, her finger to her lip, enjoining silence.

"Time's come," said the mottle-marked man. "You mind what you says to me, mistress?—'Pearls a-plenty an' I'm your woman.' You mind them words, eh?"

"Yes, of course I mind them," she said.

She stepped behind the bar; the man following her and pulling out the long till; gold and silver staring in his face; so that he bit his lip with desire for her and her plenty.

"Time's come," he said, making as if to embrace her; the woman drawing away with a swift motion; brushing, close behind him, to the other side of the bar again, smiling at him with shining eyes; slipping something bright within her long gown as she passed his back.

"Fill that," she said; tossing a sack larger than his own upon the bar before him.

Filling the sack, he slung it over his shoulder; the little sack in his other hand; and, crossing the room, opening the door a little way, peered out.

"Our weather," said he.

"Yes, our weather—my weather," she answered; looking sidewise at him from bright eyes; then, stepping swiftly into the fog, bade him follow.

"Let's walk. Let's hurry," she said; listening intently into the weather.

"Aye, let's get out o' here," he muttered, gazing hungrily at her; trying to grasp her fingers.

"Not yet—time comes," she whispered to him, laughing quietly.

"Aye—time comes—that's right," he repeated; never taking his eyes from her; from the mist in her hair, and the strange brightness in her eyes.

For a while they walked rapidly, the woman ahead, the man close behind. Suddenly she stopped, a hand to her ear. The man's face was expressionless, watching her as a dumb brute its master.

"S-s-s-s-t," she said.

She took his hand; the man jerking at her touch, his eyes on her face.

"Wait a while," she said; and, smiling, added, "Time comes."

"Aye, that's it—time comes," murmured the mottle-marked man.

"Wait here a little. I'll be right back. Keep this for us, safe," she whispered, fingering for a moment the little sack in his hand.

The man crouched where she left him, upon the spongy turf, at the foot of a stunted foreshore tree; his face expressionless; satisfied with fortune's way; his fingers unconsciously fumbling within the little sack; his lips moving imperceptibly—

"One, two, three, four, five;

One, two, three, four, five."

For an instant he thought he heard the sound of horse-hoofs and the rumble of a cart; then, realizing that it was the jingle of gold and silver in the sack upon his shoulder, grinned.

Seeing the form of a woman in the mist before him, the tavernmaster stopped in his tracks.

"A ghost from some wreck," said he to himself, "some skipper's wife's ghost gone walking."

For an instant he trembled at his superstitions; then, hearing his name spoken, cried:

"You, Judy?—You fool, what are you at?"

Holding him from following the cart, drawing him aside to the spongy turf by the rough roadway, she

whispered into his ear; the man bending to her, listening with wide eyes; biting his lip. Drawing something from beneath her long gown, she handed it to him.

"I took it from his belt," she whispered, "when he wanted to kiss me. He never knew."

The tavernmaster took the knife; staring at the long blade and feeling with his thumb the needle-sharp point. Unconsciously he hummed the tune of the sugar and rum and pearls.

"Hush, you must be quiet. Come," said the woman; and, holding his hand, she led him through the thick weather as if completely at home in it. The wet turf gave no sound; the roar of the sea and of the dying gale thundering about them; the fog as a vast blanket beaten in the wind.

Suddenly, placing a hand upon the tavernmaster's lips, the woman stopped; her other hand tightening its grip upon his wrist; her face close against his; her lips to his ear. Moving her fingers from his lips, she pointed directly before them. The man, peering into the dense fog, saw only the dim shape of a stunted foreshore tree. Still she pointed; and, still peering, he saw, directly below him, the figure of a crouching man who wore a skull-cap, and upon his legs great thigh boots; a sack over his shoulder, and in his other hand also a small sack.

The roar of the sea upon the sand was continuous, and, to one unused to it, deafening; the whine of the wind blowing in from sea unceasing; the fog a gray wall. For a moment they stood so, above the crouching figure that peered seaward below them. The woman's fingers were no longer upon the tavernmaster's wrist; her lips no longer at his ear. Her hands

clasped, the fingers interlocked, she stepped softly backward; her eyes as stars in frosty weather, her damp cheeks flushed by the sea-wind.

Suddenly, the tavernmaster bending swiftly downward, there was a deep grunt—as when a cow, in the soft peat, bogs deeper and deeper.

In the barroom of the tavern Lowlands Away-oh the lights were bright; for the day without, heavy with fog, was gray and murky. Through the open door men rolled barrels of Jamaica, lowering them through a large trap door that, opening upon stone steps, led to a great damp cellar. They ceased now and again from their labors to watch the tavernmaster, who, behind the bar, was making little stacks of gold and silver coins; and as he marked the page of his tally-book hummed a tune:

“Blow, bullies, blow;

Blow, bullies, blow.

Sugar and rum and pearls down below.”

Looking up, he called to the men:

“Come get a drink on the house, lads, when you’ve finished that little lot. Then go you and fetch that figurehead off yonder rocks afore the tide flows. I’m going to set her up by my door. Maybe I’ll buy her a new set of earrings.”

The bottle-boy, passing the drinks around, mumbled to himself, “When I grows a bit bigger I’m a-goin’ to them pearl islands”; and he stole a sip of Jamaica from the lip of a pewter mug; to make him grow.

In the wide window a sleeping yellow tomcat twitched his tail; and, thrusting his claws out, dreamed of sweet revenges.

Up-stairs, before a long mirror, stood the wife of the tavernmaster; her eyes bright, her cheeks flushed, her long hair coiled in a twist upon her head. About her white neck there lay a string of pearls, and, both hands at her neck, she fingered them lovingly, counting—

“One, two, three, four, five;

One, two, three, four, five.”

PEG-LEG'S FIDDLE

I'VE a pal called Billy Peg-leg, with one leg a wood
leg,
And Billy he's a ship's cook, and lives upon the
sea;
And, hanging by his griddle,
Old Billy keeps a fiddle,
For fiddling in the dog-watch, when the moon is on
the sea.

We takes our luck wi' tough ships, wi' fast ships, wi'
free ships,
We takes our luck wi' any ship to sign away for sea;
We takes our trick wi' the best o' them,
And sings our song wi' the rest o' them,
When the bell strikes the dog-watch, and the moon is
on the sea.

You'd ought to see them tops'ls, them stays'ls, them
stuns'ls,
When the moon's a-shinin' on them along a liftin' sea;
Hear the dandy bosun say,
"Peg-leg, make that fiddle play,
And we'll dance away the dog-watch, while the moon
is on the sea."

Then it's fun to see them dancin', them bow-legged
sailors dancin',
To the tune o' Peg-leg's fiddle, a-fiddlin' fast and free;

It's fun to watch old Peg-leg,
A-waltzin' wi' his wood leg,
When bosun takes the fiddle, so Peg can dance wi' me.

The moon is on the water, the dark moon-glimmered
water,
The night wind pipin' plaintively along a liftin' sea;
There ain't no female wimmen,
No big beer glasses brimmin',
There's just the great sea's glory, an' Billy Peg an'
me.

We takes our luck wi' tough ships, wi' fast ships, wi'
free ships,
We takes our luck wi' any ship to sign away to sea:
We takes our trick wi' the best o' them,
And sings our song wi' the rest o' them,
When the bell strikes the dog-watch and the
moon is on the sea.

AMOS TREGENNA

IT was a Sunday afternoon of mid-April, and the sea off the little town of Bude Haven was flecked with white horses. People walked to and from the town along the cliff-tops, watching the coasting-vessels come and go; for it was high water and the canal locks were thrown wide open that the little craft might pass. Amongst the people were some who turned to watch two young men, who, upon the green grass at the foot of a small knoll, seemed about to come to blows.

"I'll bet ye Amos loses that there temper o' hisn an' makes a fight of it," laughed a man of middle age to his neighbor.

"Aye, I'll bet as he does too," replied the other. "He's a hot-head. He'd ought to go Bristolward and get him a ship; joinin' the fo'csle crowd. That'd tame him!"

On the grass the two men wrangled, growing momentarily more heated; their fists clenched, their faces almost touching.

"You lie!" cried one of them. "She's mine!"

"All right! She's yours, is she? Well, that wins her from you then!" retorted the other; stepping backward to give a long arm room to drive, and bringing a clenched fist swiftly to his opponent's jaw.

The second lad, his face scarlet, but a smile on his lips, leaped at the striker, who, throwing an arm up to guard the blows that rained upon him, cried:

"It's more you want then, is it? All right, how's—" his words cut short by a man who, pushing his way between them, thrust them apart.

"Amos, you fool," he said, "don't you know your father's preaching a sermon on the cliffs not half a mile from here?"

"Let him preach! I've different ways of preaching, and they suit me fine," replied the one addressed; and taking the intruder's arm drew him aside.

"Old Dame Trewarne there, getting more o' dad's salvation?" he asked, a wide grin upon his face.

The second lad, staring resentfully at the intruder, watched his late adversary.

"Aye, she's there right enough—and Judy with her," replied the older man.

"Joe Trefusis, you were always an old fool of a meddler! Why didn't you let well be well? I wanted to lick this curly cub from Poughill once for all," said Amos.

Amos Tregenna was a young man of two inches over six feet, straight and strong as a topsail schooner's lower-mast. His hair was red, as treasure shining through the stove hatches of sunken treasure-ships, catching the sun and glinting in it; his eyes large and openly blue-bright, as deep waters under suns of Summer are openly blue-bright. His chest was deep, his arms immense and muscular, each muscle playing now as he ran fingers roughly up and down the sleeve of the man with whom he talked.

"I'm going to listen to the old man gassing to the multitudes. Come on, Trefusis! Maybe his stuff will give you good appetite for Bude beer too—it's dry enough!" he said.

"Not for me! If you were not going, then I might;

but to-day I'll mix with no more fighting red-heads," the other answered, walking away, nodding as he passed the other lad, and saying to him—

"Isn't there in all of Cornwall but just one gal to suit you two fools?"

"Why, yes! Maybe there is. But Amos has such a pleasant fighting way I like to fight him when he wills it—that's all," laughed the other.

Amos Tregenna, stepping up to them, laughing in both their faces, his hat in one hand, his red hair blown by the sea-wind, throwing an arm about the neck of each, cried—

"Come on, let's all go listen to the dad preaching, eh?"

They strolled away together, arm in arm, their voices intermingled, and their laughter high.

"Amos," said Trefusis, "I tell you what you do! You come with me to Bristol!"

"To Bristol? Trefusis, what's wrong with you to-day? Why should I come with you to Bristol?"

"I'm sailing in a week with the big clipper that passed up-channel in ballast a week or two back, bound for her lading-berth at Bristol; the finest, fastest clipper that ever sailed past Lundy, lad—the flying *Ma-haranee!*" Trefusis answered. "Come on and see the world a bit, with me for mate."

"Why, no! Cornwall suits me," Tregenna laughed.

"I think you'd better quit your fancies, lad. Young Judy's one of your old dad's latest converts; and you know that she's just her mother over, don't you? And, knowing that, you know that she's not to be easy turned?" Trefusis said.

"One of dad's converts? When?" cried Amos, staying his walk.

"Oh, I don't know since when! And I don't care. The *Maharanee* needs a few good hands in her fo'csle, and good hands are scarce at sea to-day. You come to Bristol."

"I'm going to see Judy," said Amos Tregenna, striding away over the downs, turning to wave an arm to Trefusis and his late adversary, saying—

"Fight you any time you say, Tom Yeo—lick you, too!"

It was high water, and a couple of miles from Bude a young woman making her way below the cliffs of Maer, sought a place to climb them; for her way around was cut off by the tide. She walked swiftly, springing from rock to rock; the tide aswirl about her feet, the spray from the rollers blowing now and again over her head.

"Hello, Judy! Got fooled by the tide, eh! When did you think you could outclimb the goats?" cried a laughing voice behind her.

Turning, she found herself face to face with Amos Tregenna; and, flushing, made no reply.

"Judy, see here! Can't you and I be friends? I'm not as black as you think me. It's dad who's been poisoning your mother's tea against me; ain't it, gal?" he asked, stepping to her side, standing quite unconsciously knee deep in the cold water.

"Amos, look what you're doing! Come out o' that cold water, quick!" cried the girl, finding a sudden flood of speech.

"That's all right, Judy. I'm not afeared of the old sea; and the sea'll never harm you as long as Amos stands between," he said, looking up into her dark eyes, half-serious, half-laughing.

"Amos, was it you as set the dry gorse afire and let they poor Gipsies go to jail for doing what 'twas you as done?" she asked, looking down at him.

"Oh, drat them Gipsies! Jail's too good for 'em! Let's talk o' summat else," he answered.

"I knowed it was! An' 'twas you as pulled the clappers out o' Bude church bells an' made all folks late for church and Sunday dinner, too."

Tregenna broke into a peal of laughter, and, slipping upon a weed-grown rock, would have fallen but for the girl's extended hand grasping his wrist.

"Thank you, Judy. I think maybe I'm good for naught but drowning, and pounding to pieces on these big black rocks," he said, climbing to her side. . . .

"Judy, we'd best quit making love here, and find a way up the cliffs—we'll not get up if we don't soon start," he added.

Her face crimson, the girl stepped back, almost losing her footing.

"This way," he said, and, taking her arm in his great hand, guided her along the rocks. "Don't you be minding any thing that Amos says. You know Amos is yours, eh?"

Her eyes downcast, she made no answer; letting him guide her from the lower cliffs to a ridge above. Coming presently to a huge flat-topped rock, he left her there to rest a while; going himself to stand at the rock's edge, gazing down into the waters that swirled in a deep pool below.

"Judy," he said, turning suddenly toward her, "I'm going to sea."

The girl made no reply.

"Joe Trefusis is mate of the fast *Maharanee*. I'm going in her fo'csle."

The girl still made no reply.

"When I come back I'm coming back for you. I've quit drinking, and I've quit fighting and setting dry gorse afire—and taking clappers out of church bells too," he said, and again broke into a peal of laughter.

The girl looked up at him.

"You couldn't quit—not if you tried," she said.

"What? I couldn't quit? You don't know what you're saying, gal! You think you know Amos. You don't."

It was starshine over Bude, and the light was lovely on the cliffs of Maer. Up a narrow pathway along the cliffs a woman walked, bent forward to the steep ascent. Behind her climbed a man, his arms outstretched toward her as she struggled up the steeper places. Reaching the cliff-top, they stopped, looking below them at the star-trails on the sea and at the dark ascent by which they had climbed.

"It's settled then, Judy? When I come back, you know why I come—because I want you," said the man.

"It's for you to settle, Amos Tregenna. Keep your part of the bargain. No wifing to the devil for love of you or any other, for Judy Trewarne."

"All right! We'll meet upon our rock when the fast *Maharanee* brings me to port again; and I'll have proved that I'm the man you'd have me be."

"Good night. Don't forget to let the church bells ring when church time comes herefrom," she said.

"So-long, Judy. I'll let your bells ring loud and long as you wish them to. Ship bells for me from now for many a day," he answered her, taking her hand in his great paw.

"How strong you are!" she exclaimed, shuddering for a moment at the feel of his grip upon her fingers; and then unconsciously coming closer to him as though to seek shelter from a storm-wind in his high protection; stepping back again as he reached to take her other hand.

"Good-by. Good luck to ship bells on the sea, and you!"

"Good-by, Judy! Good luck to church bells on the shore, and you!"

Struck by his serious tones, the girl started, searching his face in the star-gloom.

"Good-by."

"So-long, Judy. I don't like 'good-by.'"

"So-long then, Amos; and remember—our rock is firm, *and so am I.*"

The skipper of the clipper *Maharanee*, lifting to the stiff south trades, walked to and fro upon his ship's white poop, his hands behind his back; his eyes searching the long horizon-line ashore.

Stopping suddenly, he blew his whistle, calling to the mate—

"Haul the weather braces tight."

In a moment the hands were hauling in upon the weather braces; pulling to the outcry of a small man with a wizened face, who though the smallest of the sailors was yet the noisiest. The braces sweated up; and the men returned to their various occupations, this man leaped into the rigging, scanning the horizon as he did so.

"Th' owld devil! 'E's seed some ship," he said, and swung himself quickly aloft.

In a few moments he was seated astride the top-

gallant yard; a man face to face with him helping him to serve a new footrope.

"Murray, 'ow'd you like a good swaller o' rum?" he asked his companion.

"You little swab, you, Jim! You're looking for trouble, ain't you?" replied the other.

"I'm lookin' fer to wet me whistle wi' a shot o' rum—an' I'm a-goin' to get it, too," said the little sailor, his legs dangling from the yard-arm, clothed in baggy dungarees many sizes too large for them.

"I ain't goin' to be left out o' no drinkin'-match, Jim Carey," replied the other.

"Come on—there's eight bells a-strikin', an' it's our watch below," said Carey; and, seizing a backstay, he slid to the deck.

It was the second dog-watch; and, the day's work over, all hands were gathered about the main hatch to pass the time away till the beginning of the night watches.

Some of them stood by the railing, watching a strange-faced fellow throwing his sheath knife deftly at a wooden deck-bucket, the blade sticking time after time unerringly in the hard wood, and quivering from the force of the throw.

"'E is a artist, ain't 'e?" said Jim Carey, watching the foreign sailor fling his knife.

The thrower laughed at the men about him; himself an elfish fellow with long, curly hair uncombed and tangled, with wild eyes and thick lips; a ragged shirt and trousers on his limbs, his feet and head bare, his face unshaven.

"I show you do dot, see? I show you fallers," he laughed, throwing the knife time and again.

"Ain't 'e the loony fish? Tregenna, can you throw

a knife that way? You big red-'ead, you!" asked Jim Carey.

"I don't use knives. White men use fists," replied Tregenna.

"Aye! You looks like you could knock a bullick down wi' they big fists o' yours," said Carey. "'Ow 'ard can you 'it a man?"

"Hard enough to keep him quiet a while, my boy," replied Tregenna; "but I'm picking no fights with any one."

"Hall right, old son! Maybe some day you'll get 'ung too! Same as crazy Johnson 'ere's a-goin' ter be," answered Carey; and, laughing at his own wit, he walked toward the fo'csle.

It was the first watch of the night, and Jim Carey walked to and fro upon the fo'csle head, keeping the lookout. The starshine, dim upon his little figure, clothed in its baggy trousers and tight-fitting under-shirt, a wide sun-downer upon his head, gave him the appearance of some peculiar amphibian—a creature half-fish, half-human, altogether grotesque—that had ascended from the sea to the ship's deck to look about the world. Clouds were gathering from the southward, and the wind was coming in short, stiff squalls. Stopping in his walk, Carey leaned over the fo'csle rail, addressing a man upon the deck below.

"Bill, you hordinary lubber! You give me a lot o' damp matches. Me pipe ain't drawin'. Bring us up a light, will 'ee?"

They stood together, their backs against the rail, watching the boom end swing above the sea.

"All right, Bill! W'en four bells goes an' that there big red-'ead relieves me up 'ere you an' me'll go ex-

plorin' down that there ventilator shaft, eh? Is it a go?" said Carey.

"It's a go, Jim; an' you look here! You keeps it mum. Don't you go say nothing to no one; an' least of all to Red Tregenna—'e's one o' they 'oly buggars what don't use good liquor. 'E don't know nothing," said Bill Murray.

"Wothever is a 'oly buggar, Bill? I ain't never 'eard of it."

Behind them, upon the forward bell, four bells rang out; and Carey, whispering, "There she goes now," shouted aft to the officer upon the bridge—

"A-l-l-l-l's well, sir."

"All's well, Mister Red-'ead," he said as Tregenna took the lookout over.

"What's all the hurry?" asked Tregenna as with Murray the little fellow hurried down the ladder to the gloom of the main deck.

"'Urry nothin'! Bill an' me's goin' to sit on the main 'atch an' talk about 'ow to make chafin'-mats an' such. 'Urry yerself!" said Carey.

A cloud swept over the *Maharanee*, the wind burying her rails deep in the sea, the ropes complaining as she strained at her gear.

"It's jest the wery evenin' I've been waitin' for," said Carey as the two men walked to the midship house.

"You'll need lots o' matches, Jim," said Murray.

"Aye, an' not damp ones neither," replied Carey.

Climbing to the top of the deck-house they listened to the outcry of the night.

"Bill, if anything should 'appen while I'm down in the 'old you jest stick yer 'ead down the ventilator an'

'oller at the top of yer voice— 'Light on the port beam, sir.' " said Carey.

"There won't be no light; but you kin make out as you thought you seen one, and I'll be up like a jumpin' fish; see?" he added.

"Are you sure you can squeeze through them grating-bars at the bottom of the ventilator?" asked Murray.

"I got a belayin'-pin in me belt. I can pry 'em open," answered Carey.

Leaving the bridge, the mate of the *Maharanee* walked to the fo'csle head.

"Good sailing weather, Tregenna. She's knocking off her fifteen knots right along. We'll be home in quick time if we get much of this, eh?" he said to the lookout man.

"Can't be too soon for me, sir," replied Tregenna.

"Amos, do you suppose the spell your old dad worked on the Trewarne girl will stay all her life?" asked the mate.

"Hard to say, sir. Dad's got a queer way with him."

"How long's he been an itinerant preacher, Amos?"

"About as far back as I recall, sir."

"I wonder what sort of a duck you'd have turned out if it hadn't fallen through when he and old mother Trewarne were sweethearts, eh?"

Amos Tregenna laughed.

"Glad they fell out, sir. Dad's given me ali the crazy streak I need, without my having had Dame Trewarne for my mother. She's a real old fanatic."

Returning to the bridge, the mate watched the compass swing.

In the 'tween-decks hold Jim Carey crawled over

the cargo; peering, by the light of matches, at crates and bales of merchandise that groaned and creaked all around him.

"Hif all 'ands was to 'oller down that there ventilator I'd not 'ear nothin' down 'ere in all this racket," he said.

"Ah!" he exclaimed presently. "Look at *that*! That's the stuff as old Ginger Kit laps up at Patsy Warson's saloon on Scotland road!"

By the next match-flare he saw before him a row of small wooden kegs.

"I wants you in bottles, my pretty," he cried, striking another light.

"'Ome, sweet 'ome; an' all 'ome's comforts, Jimmy," he muttered, dragging a case of rum abaft the mizzen mast.

Leaning over the ventilator Bill Murray whispered:

"'Ow is it, Jim? Is it all sir-garney-oh?"

"Feel o' *that*," said Carey, taking Murray's hand and rubbing it along his belt.

Upon the flying-boom of the *Maharanee* Jim Carey was bending a new jib topsail, talking to a sailor who tucked a long splice in the flying-jib downhaul.

Finishing their jobs at the same time and starting to the deck together, the other man laid a hand on Carey's arm.

"Jim, where'd ye get it?" he asked.

"Git wot, you 'ard-tack maggot? Wot ye talkin' about?" answered Carey.

"Ye can't fool me thataway, Carey. Ye've got liquor. I smells it on yer," replied the other.

"Shut up, ye fool! D'ye want all 'ands to 'ear?" said Carey, scowling up at the large man beside him,

the green seas tumbling below them, and the bow-wash slapping sprays about their legs.

"Where'd ye get it? Me innards is cold," growled the other.

"Keep yer mouth shut. Maybe we'll 'ave a pleasant little time in the dog-watch to-night. Maybe not. Keep mum."

They went to the deck, parting company and going to different jobs.

At noon of the following day when the sailor bringing the soup forward from the galley put it upon the fo'csle table he uttered a great oath; he was the man who had been with Carey upon the flying boom.

"What t'hell d'ye think o' that? It's burned soup ag'in, by God!" he shouted, staring from one to another of the hands, sitting awaiting their dinner.

He was a large man with a bony and prominent hooked nose, his mouth loose-lipped and his watery blue eyes shifty; the air of a bully about him; his manner alternately subservient and aggressive.

"'Tain't no use to go hell-raisin' over little things," said Carey, reaching for the soup-kid.

"Is it old red-'ead, eh?" he added, turning to Tregenna, seated at his side.

"Bean soup's poor living when it's burned that way," replied Tregenna, "but maybe 'twas done accidental. Let's see how it tastes anyway."

"You louse, you," shouted the man who had fetched the dinner forward. "It's the likes o' you as makes 'ell ships where sailors gits starved an' driven by the blasted mates!"

"Maybe you'd do well to go a bit easy, Mason. Who d'you think you're talking to?" said Tregenna, looking up at him.

"By God, I ain't said nothin' against none o' you boys! It's them blasted mates an' skippers as I'm speakin' of. You're all right, Tregenna; but just acos you've growed a red beard since she left Bristol that ain't sayin' as you're aught but young yet. You wait till you've seen some o' the hell at sea as Tom Mason 'as—then talk!" replied Mason.

The men, frowning and spitting, tasted the soup.

"Come on, boys—let's go aft. Let's go tell that old devil Barracout w'at we thinks o' him," cried Mason; and, picking up the soup-kid, he stepped to the deck.

The others followed; for the taste of sweet brown rum was strong in Bill Murray's mouth, and Jim Carey was in a care-free mood. One after another they piled out of the fo'csle, the watch on deck looking at them inquisitively as they started aft; Mason in the lead, Carey and Murray in the rear, a big Scandinavian sailor beside Mason, and the elf-faced fellow behind him.

"Come on, Tregenna—come an' give old Barracout hell," said Murray, turning back as he left the fo'csle.

"You'd best go a bit slow, boys. You're looking for trouble, and Barracout'll meet you more than half-way," replied Tregenna, sitting at the table.

Seeing Tregenna there, the elf-faced man returned to the fo'csle, taking his seat and bending over his plate, eating the burned soup with the avidity, and almost with the gesture, of a hungry dog; helping himself from the half-filled plate of one of the others when his own was gone.

"Bill," said Jim Carey as they walked aft, "there's trouble afoot. W'y did you let that fool Mason in on our party?"

"Kick yourself. Don't kick me. 'Twas you as much as 'twas me," replied Murray.

"Where's Tregenna?" asked Mason, turning about.

"Tregenna's one o' they 'oly buggars; 'e's afraid," said Murray.

"That's wot Bill keeps a-sayin'," said Jim Carey. "I ain't never 'eard of it."

"Come on. Quit talkin' an' let's go tell old Barra-cout wot we thinks o' 'im," said Mason as they approached the quarter-deck.

Coming to the cabin door, they hesitated.

"Who's a-goin' to do the talkin'?" asked Mason.

"You, damn you! You brung us 'ere, didn't yer?" said Carey, looking up at the big bully, whose courage was ebbing—a fo'csle hand at the cabin door with so small a thing as burned soup for complaint.

They stood there a moment, each waiting for another to do the talking.

"You louses, you're afraid," said Carey, and, stepping forward, rapped upon the cabin door.

"Stoord," he said when the steward came in answer to his knock, "tell the capt'in as we wants ter see 'im, will yer?"

"You tell 'im, Jim, too, as they's weevils in the 'ard-tack," whispered Mason, a hand to his mouth.

"You louse! You ain't but a maggot yourself," said Carey, aloud.

In a moment the captain stood before them; a tall figure, slightly stooped in the low doorway, in his shirt sleeves, his thin arms bare, his eyes hard slits looking straight at the men of the fo'csle; looking at and through and beyond them, almost as though unaware of their presence.

"Well—what is it?"

"Sir," said Jim Carey, touching his cap, his face uplifted, the suspicion of a friendly smile in his eyes, "we's come aft, sir, to arst if we can't 'ave a bit better grub, sir? The soup's 'most always burned, an' th' 'ard-tack's maggoty."

Mason, holding the soup-kid, watching the skipper's face, his hand unsteadied by the rum within him, tilted the soup-kid without noticing that he did so; a few drops of the thick yellow liquid spilling upon the clipper's spotless quarter-deck.

"Get forrard! You dogs! Get forrard!" snapped the skipper; his thin eyes blazing, his chin outstretched; his fingers clenched—his gaze upon the spilled soup on his quarter-deck.

The fo'csle hands went forward, speechless, silent, their eyes dull, their faces expressionless; the watch on deck staring at them as they passed by.

"What did he say?" asked a man of the other watch.

"'E called us a lot o' ruddy dogs!" said Carey. "That's wot we is—dogs! Jest a lot o' dogs! My God!"

"Jim," whispered Murray in Carey's ear, "it'll be blacker'n hell to-night. I'm a-goin' for some more liquor. To hell wi' Barracout!"

Returning to the fo'csle, they ate what cold soup was left them; crumbling the moldering hard-tack into it; knocking the weevils from it, and sourly jesting of the sea.

In his bunk, full-bellied and content, lay the elf-faced man, dozing; while, leaning in the doorway, looking across the running seas, stood Amos Tregenna.

The second mate stood on the bridge, watching the sails draw. He was a small, dark man, of most unpleasant expression; a man whose outlook had long

ago been soured by his constant failures to rise higher than a second mate's berth. He had given up trying long ago; and sailed now, voyage by voyage, in the full knowledge that younger men who were better men constantly passed him by. Soured and friendless, he had come to hate the sea and ships and all to do with them; looking forward eagerly to each port, and dreading equally each new ship he sailed with.

Arising from his supper, the skipper went to the quarter-deck door, thinking to walk the deck a while, out of the cool trade-wind, in the shelter of the break of the poop; and, stepping out to the quarter-deck, slipped, and fell heavily to the deck. In an instant he was up, his face white with rage, his lips set tight, his fists clenched; and in a couple of strides was at the foot of, and ascending, the poop accommodation ladder.

"You!" he bellowed. "You there, by God! What are you here for, sir? Why don't you get this ship's decks cleared up at night?"

His breath failing him, he stood glaring at the second mate; the second mate, his lips parted, his eyes cold, his face white, could make no reply; and left the poop to call men aft to clear up the quarter-deck.

It was soon after eight bells of the midnight watch when upon the top of the midship house there crouched a man, who, with his head bent over the ventilator coaming, listened.

On the deck below walked Amos Tregenna, dreaming that he helped a girl up a steep cliff pathway as the tide flowed in; Jim Carey at his side talking of ships in which he had sailed, unconscious that Tregenna was not listening to him—both men well contented with their own thoughts.

Suddenly, men dropping from the midship house to the deck in front of him; Carey, striking a match to light his pipe held it up, peering under the flame.

"Ye think ye're mighty smart, Murray, don't ye?" he said, staring at Murray, who stood before him, his arms full of bottles; Mason, similarly laden, directly behind him.

"Come on, boys! T'ell wi' Barracout an' his ship! Let's go to the fo'csle an' get liquored up," said Mason, his large hands clasping the bottles.

"I ain't never goin' to turn down no sociable invitation," said Carey; "but see 'ere! Who's a-goin' to pay the piper for 'is tune? Pipers 'as to be paid."

"Never you mind no pipers. You come along o' we! There's good liquor for all on us, an' more below," said Mason, leading the way forward.

"Come on, Tregenna," said Murray; "come an' get liquored up while it's good goin'."

"Carey's right," said Tregenna; "pipers have to be paid. I'm going to pay no piper for any fool tune you iads are going to pipe. You'd best chuck that rum overboard and get a touch of sense."

Murray followed the others to the fo'csle, saying as he entered—

"Red's a big fool—'e's scared!"

Tregenna, watching the phosphorus on the sea, walked the decks alone; seeing the stars reel overhead, and the flare of the side light on the bow; dreaming again that it was starshine on the rocks of Maer; hearing a voice say, "You couldn't quit—not if you tried!" and laughing to himself.

In the fo'csle sat the sailors of the watch, all save the helmsman, the lookout and Amos Tregenna.

"Here's how, bullies!" said Tom Mason, lifting a bottle high, and answered by—

"Here's how, Tom—short runs, says I, an' good ships."

Mason's lips sipped and sucked at the bottle, his watery eyes glimmered by the light of the turned-down lamp.

There was the sound of some one entering the fo'csle, the soft pad of bare feet on the deck; and, looking up, they saw the elf-faced fellow enter, his wide eyes shining, his curly, tangled hair blown by the wind, his hands outstretched toward the table where the bottles lay.

"I show you do dot, fallers!" he said, cackling in his hairy throat, reaching a bottle and knocking the head off against the bulkhead; taking long swallows from it.

"The loony fish! 'E's gone an' left the lookout! 'E must 'ave 'eard us talkin', eh?" said Carey.

"Aye—or else must have smelt the stuff; they's got noses on 'em like dogs, crazy flitters such as 'e be 'as," said Murray, watching the crazy man drink from the bottle-neck.

Mason, who had stepped to the deck for a moment, reëntered the fo'csle.

"It's all right," he said; "old red-'ead's gone to the lookout."

At eight bells the watches came aft; the mate wondering why they should be so noisy; their voices drifting back as they went forward again; their laughter loud on the night, despite the outcry of wind and sea.

Both watches gathered in the starboard fo'csle, laughing and joking, finishing the last drops from rum bottles; crazy Johnson, in the center of them, standing

upon a sea-chest, his tangled hair brushing the deck above him, his eyes aglow with delight; rum spilled down his ragged shirt and upon his hairy chest.

"I show you do dot, fallers," he said continually.

Morning broke upon a windy sea, the ship racing through gray smothers, the sky cloud-hidden. At daybreak Tregenna, relieved at the wheel by the Scandinavian sailor, reporting the course to the mate, stopped to say:

"Let her go, sir! Soon make the voyage if she keeps this up!"

"Aye, let her go! She can't fly too fast for me," replied Trefusis.

The ship was, as she had been for many days, under topgallantsails; the trade strong and steady from southeast.

At seven bells the skipper came on deck, looking at the fresh weather and at his driving ship.

"Take the fore and mizzen topgallants off at eight bells. She's losing way by pitching so heavily," he said.

On deck the watch waited for eight bells; waiting to go below for breakfast; the watch below waiting to come on duty.

The second came to the bridge to take the day's work from the mate.

"We'll take the fore and mizzen t'gallants in," said the mate.

As eight bells struck the second went forward, shouting—

"Clew up fore and mizzen topgallantsails; all hands to the gear."

The men of the watch below lingered in the fo'c'sle, for Mason had entered with three bottles under his

oilskin coat; and, the watch on deck gathering around the door, all hands were talking and laughing at once.

On deck the big Scandinavian sailor, relieved at the wheel by a starboard watch man, spoke to Tregenna.

"Soon now mates vill see vot iss—den vill drouble be," he said.

"Aye, some one's going to foot a piper's bill," replied Tregenna.

The two men stood at the mizzen topgallant gear, on the port quarter-deck; the ship, on the port tack, lying deep in the sea.

The second mate, making toward the fore topgallant halyards, passed behind them, shouting to the dallying crew to get to the gear. The disgrace of the uncleared decks of the previous evening was fresh in his mind; the sting of the skipper's angry words still lashed him; and, hating the sea and ships and sailors, he cried as he passed Tregenna:

"You, damn you! Quit dreamin' of your west country slut, an' lay 'old o' that gear."

Tregenna, standing at the weather railing, waiting, watching the seas roar past the clipper, seeing mirrored in them the face of a girl who seemed to smile to him, whose lips appeared to move, heard the words—the words crashing suddenly upon his brain and for an instant stunning him, robbing him of breath, numbing his limbs—the dream-face still smiling to him from the curling sea-crests.

Suddenly, as it had whelmed him, the numbness left him; leaving a scald of hot blood surging to his temples, a flame before his eyes, through which he saw the face of the girl of the cliff pathways.

He swung upon his heel, fury in all his being, and met the eyes of the second mate, who, seeing the madness in his face, quailed.

Amos Tregenna's fist flew out in the full flood of raging anger.

Without motion of resistance, without time to raise an arm, the second mate fell back; the deck swept with white water as, a squall taking her high canvas, the *Maharanee* dipped deeper in the sea. His head struck heavily upon an iron ring-bolt; and, motionless, he lay amidst the running water, a crimson trickle flowing from the corner of his lips.

The skipper, on his bridge, hearing no words in the uproar of wind and sea, saw the blow.

"Hold those 'gallants, sir," he shouted to the mate, and, to the helmsman, "Up one point—steady your helm!" and to the mate again: "Get the irons on that man. Lock him up!"

Without a word or gesture Tregenna suffered the irons to be placed upon his great wrists; gazing down upon a face than which his own was far more dreadful—a face o'er which there stole an expression of contentment; as though its owner has found at last bright beauty on the sea.

Locking Tregenna in an after-cabin, Trefusis spoke: "I'm sorry, Amos. I saw it all."

Tregenna did not hear, or see, Trefusis.

The hands gathered around the body of the second mate, the water gently lifting his limp limbs to and fro.

Amongst them, his eyes cold, his face stern, stepped the skipper of the *Maharanee*.

The sailors looked upon the dead man's face; some

with white faces, others with smiles upon their lips. An officer was killed; a man who had been a driver of poor sailors on the sea.

The ship staggered heavily as another squall took her, driving her deep, her rails awash, the sprays flashing to her high top-sail leeches; and, looking aloft, Jim Carey muttered—

“’Er masts is a-goin’ to rip out.”

Mason was there, more than half-drunk, his watery eyes wide and filled with a crazy light.

“Sarve ’im right! Sarve ’im right for drivin’ pore sailors,” said he, leering at the skipper.

The skipper, the sprays driving upon him as upon the sailors gathered there, strode toward the man, his fists clenched and an arm upraised.

“You dog! Get forrard—get forrard!”

Mason, expecting a blow, threw up an arm; his other fist doubled as though to strike back.

A man of elfish face and half-human appearance, his breath strong of rum, his hair tousled about his unshaven face, and his feet bare in the cold water, stepped forward.

“I show you do dot, fallers!” he cried; and with a motion magically swift drew a shining knife from his sheath.

There was a flash of sudden light upon the murky air of that gray morning, and the skipper, a hand to his throat, blood spurting to the deck, staggered and fell.

A gasp ran among the gathered sailors.

The clipper, a great sea boarding her forward, buried her bows deep in the ridges; quivering from stem to stern, her sheets and halyards cracking and her long white decks awash.

Joe Trefusis, coming from the cabin, saw his skipper wounded to the death and sensed his ship trembling to the onslaught of an approaching squall yet stiffer than the last.

Shouting: "You louse! You ruddy louse!" Jim Carey leaped at the elf sailor's face, beating him with clenched fists, bearing him down; the water swirling about them; the men of the watches cheering and laughing.

"Let 'im 'ave it, Jimmie; give it to 'im!" cried one.

"Don't you stand fer it, Dutchie—git up an' fight 'im," cried another.

The mate ran forward,

"Clew up the fore and mizzen t'gallants," he shouted; and, grasping Carey by the arm, said—

"Carey, lower that fore t'gallant—let her go easy."

Carey arose and ran to the halyards, ready to lower; the ship plunging as the angry sea roared around her.

The men, half-sobered by the ship's behavior, clewed up the two topgallant sails; and, the ship steadying her gait at once, gathered about. Mason, the sails clewed up, had taken a bottle from his coat.

"Drink 'earty, lads! There's plenty more of it below," he said.

The elf man seized the bottle from Mason's lips, shouting, "I show you," and, taking a long swallow, walked to the lee of the fo'csle, where, falling to the deck, he curled up as though he were part human and part dog.

"Gi' us a drop, Mason," said one.

"Take the bottle. I'm a-goin' for more," said Mason.

The mate stepped amongst them.

"Get to those yards—furl the 'gallants," he said, Mason moving toward the fo'csle as he spoke.

They looked at the mate, and one or two started to the rigging; others standing with sneers on their faces—the second mate killed, the skipper killed; their bodies warmed by the rum and their brains in a maze.

"'Ere's 'ow, mister," said the man with the bottle, laughing at the mate and raising the bottle to his lips.

The mate grasped the bottle; the sailors shouting:

"'Old on to it! Don't you let 'im 'ave it, Dicky."

The man wrestled, trying to keep the bottle.

From a fo'csle port Mason shouted—

"'Ere y'are sons—a whole ruddy shipload of it!"

The man dropped the bottle.

"Come on, mister! You come an' 'ave one along o' us," he said, turning toward the fo'csle.

Far aloft the two topgallant sails were threshing at their gear—beating themselves to ruin upon the yards.

"By Heaven!" said Joe Trefusis. "I'll settle this thing," and, stepping to the rail, he took from it a teak belaying-pin.

He stepped over the sill into the fo'csle, his eyes as steel spear-points; the belaying-pin in his hand.

"Out of here! Get to those 'gallant yards."

The men stared at him, his words ringing in their ears.

Mason, his watery eyes upon the mate's face, stepped forward.

"To hell wi' you!" he shouted. "You're a louse wot ought to be a-crawlin' on a monkey-perch. You ain't no one. You're a louse!"

"See how that suits you then," said Trefusis quietly; and brought the belaying-pin squarely upon Mason's jaw, his left fist at the next instant striking where the

belaying-pin had struck. Mason dropped screaming to the deck.

"There ain't no call for that, by God!" shouted a sailor of the starboard watch, a huge man named Barlow; a fellow of monstrous limbs and a gorilla-like face; his shirt, wide open, showing a great chest covered with black hair; his huge arms similarly covered; his small eyes full of a devilish, drunken light.

"Out of here! Aloft, you dogs!" said Trefusis, making toward Barlow; pushing smaller men aside that he might get to the fellow.

"Take 'im, by God! Take 'im, boys! We'll show the louse who 'e is!" shouted the gorilla sailor, making for Trefusis; his nostrils drawn upward, his lips apart, his broken yellow teeth showing—as though he were indeed a gorilla.

"Back!" said Joe Trefusis, his eyes upon the eyes of the sailor; his voice cold and steady; and, a hand slipping within his coat, pointed a pistol at the fellow's chest.

"Back, hell! There ain't no back, by God!" yelled the other, throwing a man out of his way and rushing upon the mate.

The gorilla sailor lay writhing upon the fo'c'sle deck.

"Aloft!" said the mate of the *Maharanee*, his right fist, the belaying-pin held fast in it, swinging right and left; beating upon the crowded men, herding them through the door as though they were so many cattle—the men crowding each other to escape his blows, yelling, "Aye, aye, sir—aloft it is, sir," and: "'Old on, sir. I ain't done nothin'."

"You'll do something now. Get aloft!" said Trefusis.

The men swarmed to the rigging; Mason, his face bloody, his eyes filled with terror, whimpering—

“Aloft, sir; aye, ayè, sir.”

Trefusis followed them to the deck, seeing as he did so three men who, laden with bottles, came from the top of the midship house; one of them saying:

“’Ere you are! Pass ’em down. Ain’t she the dandy packet though?”

One of them passed bottles from the house-top to another on the deck below; the third man, his arms full of bottles, crying, “I show you do dot, fallers!” and as he spoke jumping lightly to the deck.

Trefusis stepped up to them.

“Throw that stuff overboard.”

The two of them, seeing the light in his eyes and the rest of the hands in the rigging, sensing that he held the upper hand, started to obey, but from the lips of the elf sailor a cry rang out—

“I show you do dot, fallers!”

He hurled a bottle straight at the head of Joe Trefusis; followed by another and another in swift succession.

The mate had ducked upon one knee, the first bottle grazing his forehead; bringing the blood down his cheek.

“You’ll show *me* nothing,” he said, and fired at the breast of the mad sailor.

His shot went wild, and a cry rang from the deck behind the fellow. Another bottle struck him, knocking his hat off and for an instant stunning him. He fired again.

“Aloft, you dogs!” said the mate of the *Maharanee* to two men who stared at a quivering form upon the deck before them; a form dressed in ragged shirt and

dungarees; a face from which glazing eyes looked skyward.

The two men went aloft.

"You'll show no one any more, I think," said Trefusis, watching the pallor stealing over Johnson's face; death coming into the poor mad man's eyes.

"Carey, I'm sorry, lad. Where did I hit you?" he asked, bending over a little man, who writhed moaning upon the deck abaft the dying sailor.

"Hi don't know, mister. Gawd, 'ow it 'urts!"

Bending down, Trefusis lifted him from the deck and bore him aft; laying him in the second mate's bunk. Then, going to a locked door, he opened it and stepped within.

"Amos," he said, "we've got our hands full."

Amos Tregenna, sitting listless upon the deck, made no reply; and the mate, taking the irons from his wrists, said:

"Go take the wheel. That fellow's been there long enough."

Under main topgallant sail the *Maharanee* was making easy weather.

Trefusis returned to Jim Carey; cutting away his trouser and baring a wound in his leg, behind the knee.

"Mister mate, you'd best be a-fixin' that there ventilator atop o' the midship 'ouse," said Carey.

The mate, when he had bound the wound to his satisfaction, went to the deck; and, calling the big Scandinavian sailor, bade him fetch tools and cut the jackstay from a spare spar that lay lashed under the forward railing. With the jackstay cut into lengths and the ventilator securely barred, he called the hands to where the bodies of the second mate and skipper lay.

"Murray," he said, "you're handy with a needle?"

Very well! You men go fetch from the sail-locker that storm canvas that lies along the port side. Bring it here. Murray, you'll get your palm and needle and sew these men up for burial. You'll handle them respectful."

It was close to noon.

At four bells, while Murray sat stitching under the mizzen rigging, Trefusis set the topgallants again in a falling wind; and by the end of the first dog watch had the ship under all sail.

The hands set sail in silence; singing no chanteys on the halyards, silenced by the presence of still forms upon the deck; by the upturned face of Johnson, lying white beneath the main rigging; and the dark shadow that slept, face downward, in the fo'csle. Afraid of the latter, the watch below had not ventured to go to their bunks; sleeping by preference upon the cold planks below the fo'csle head, in the clipper's bow, where the bow wash was noisy about them as she dipped to the swell.

When eight bells was struck the mate blew his whistle for all hands to muster; Bill Murray standing, a lantern in his hand, beneath the bridge-head, saying:

"All ready, sir. The job's done, sir."

"Carry your captain to the after hatch. Lay the second mate beside him. You'll handle them respectful," said Joe Trefusis.

The hands bore the skipper of the fast *Maharanee* to rest till daybreak upon the after hatch, beneath the bridge of his tall ship, where no peering star might see the pallor on a sleeping sailor's face. Beside him they laid the form of the second mate, to rest a while, near to his skipper—poor seamanship forgotten between

them; waiting for dawn to come from out the eastern sky.

When they had borne these dead to their resting-place, the hands stood as though expectant, below the bridge-head; seeming to wait an order from the mate. The mate appeared to be unaware of their presence. A sailor, touching his hat in salute, came to the head of the poop accommodation-ladder, a figure dark against the sky-line, distinct in the starlight.

"What is it?" asked Joe Trefusis.

"Mister, them that's layin' on the deck, sir, wot will we do wi' *them*, sir?"

"You'll leave them lie."

The man, abashed, returned to his comrades; his comrades whispering amongst themselves, and to him; seeming to urge him to do, or to say, something. Again the figure appeared at the head of the poop-ladder.

"Mister, we're feared they'll fetch us evil luck, sir, two corpses, sir,—wot ought to be decent buried in the sea. We're feared o' them."

"They hired the piper. Leave them lie. No one touches them till morning comes," said the mate.

The sailors walked forward, going slowly; gathering about the main hatch, not daring to enter the fo'csle; or to walk the deck where Johnson lay, his arms outstretched upon the deck. All through the night-watches the *Maharanee* sped onward, the stars bright above her, the wind-song in her dainty rigging; no lights along her deck; no voices; no footfalls—the sleepers on her after hatch, the sleeper in the fo'csle, face down on the hard planks, the elf man in the main rigging, face toward the sky, seeming to cry for silence

on their last night upon the water's face; their last night beneath the spread wings of a speeding clipper; sleepers lying unutterably still—the elf sailor, as though listening to a voice above the stars, his face expectant, eager. . . . “You show me do dot?”

The *Maharanee* sped on.

Tregenna, while the mate lay down to sleep a while, walked the poop, his head erect; his eyes upon the weather; his senses keen—hearing a voice that spoke across the sea to him—

“Our rock is firm, Amos; and so am I.”

He heard the tones of ship-bells as the watchers struck the hours till day should come; and heard the sea surge shoreward by the rocks of Maer.

Day broke above a racing clipper, her rails dipping to the green sea; sprays flashing about her; low-hovering sea-fowl following her fast feet.

The mate blew his whistle.

“Lower away the royals. Clew up.”

They lowered the royals to the mast-heads, easing the wind-strain upon the masts; easing her swift pace through the sea, as, far to the east, a grayness overspread the sky.

“Square the main yards,” said the mate.

They hauled in upon the port braces, throwing the sails aback in the wind—stopping the clipper; holding her halted in her eastward race, lifting idly on the swells.

The ship hove-to, for the burial of her captain and her second mate. A sailor stepped from amongst his comrades, approaching the mate as upon the evening before, saluting, and expectant.

“Well? What is it?”

“Mister, we ain’t no dogs, sir.”

"Well? What of it?"

"There's Barlow, sir; an' Johnson, sir."

"Well?"

"Can't they be decent buried in the sea, sir? Same as them others?"

"Murray, get your needle. Sew those men up. All right, men. Give Murray a hand, any of you who are handy with a palm and needle."

A breath of satisfaction ran amongst the gathered sailors, all of them hurrying forward; several fetching palms and needles to help Bill Murray with the shrouding of their comrades.

No longer afraid of the sailor face-down upon the deck, they entered the fo'csle; standing above him; one of them saying—

"'E couldn't be just buried like a dog."

Another saying—

"That's wot the mate called 'im—a dawg."

Another saying:

"Did you ever see 'im dance? At Dad's place on Pacific Street?"

Another making answer:

"Aye! An' to old Christine Zonino's too, at Genoa? D'ye mind old Christine's daughters? Them two dago gals? Did y'ever see 'im dancin' wi' the littlest one?"

"Aye! 'E was a one to dance! Mind 'ow 'e'd sing 'Roll the Cotton'?"

"'E won't never lap up no more ale, pore chap, will 'e? Nor no more rum!"

"'E's got to be decent buried. 'Is corpse 'd fetch us bad luck."

Murray coming, they helped him measure the gorilla sailor for his sail-cloth shroud; whispering and nodding their heads; speaking softly in that gloomy fo'csle.

Below the main rigging three men knelt beside the elf sailor.

"'E was crazy, wasn't 'e? Crazier than hell!"

"Aye, 'e was crazy sure enough. What turned his mind, I wonder?"

"Maybe the cold sea. Maybe he was with some ship as got hove down off Stiff. Maybe he was once weeks in an open boat. There ain't no telling on the sea, is there?"

"That's right, there ain't! It might ha' been old Stiff—ice-floes off Stiff, eh? It might ha' been some woman, too!"

They sat together, sewing on the sail-cloth shroud.

The sewing done, the twine cut, the needles stuck through their jumpers, the palms yet on their hands, they arose, looking from one to another.

"Will we carry them aft? Will we lay them alongside the skipper and the second mate?"

"Aye, let's carry 'em aft, lads. They've all to be decent buried in the sea."

They bore the two forms aft, carrying them slowly, easily; while above them, in the rigging, the wind moaned by—the surge of the waiting sea lapping alongside the stilled clipper.

The ship's cook stared from his galley door, a small Malay watching white sailors at their curious rites; decent burial for the sea's dead in the bosom of the sea.

From the mate's room Bill Murray, come to see how his pal was faring, watched, through a port, the company upon the quarter-deck.

"What's goin' on on deck, now, Bill?" asked Carey.

"They're a-buryin' the corpuses—all on 'em together," answered Murray.

Rising on one elbow, Carey peered through the port.

"'Ark to Red Tregenna!" said Bill Murray.

The hands were gathered by the quarter-rail, where the bodies of the dead lay side by side; their feet resting on the railing, their heads upheld by old comrades.

"Amos," the mate had said, "do you call to mind the words for burying a man?"

"No, sir; none but a very few—a few that I have heard my father use at funerals by Poughill churchyard, and sometimes at Bude too, sir."

"You'll have to say what words you know above them, Amos; for I know none. Will you say such as you can call to mind?"

Amos Tregenna stood, bareheaded, on the topgallant railing then, looking into the deep green sea beside the clipper; trying to recall words that he had heard his father use at burials of folk who, dying in his stern beliefs, had willed that he should bury them. He could recall but very few.

"Are you ready?" asked Joe Trefusis, standing on the deck below the great red-bearded sailor.

Tregenna nodded his head, his eyes upon the waters of the restless sea; as though he looked into a calling face that hovered there.

"Ashes to ashes—dust to dust," said Amos Tregenna.

The still forms were lowered, one by one.

The funeral was over; the mate looking at what was left of the crew of the *Maharanee*.

"There'll be new watches picked," he said. "Tregenna will take one and I the other. If there's any more trouble aboard, I will start it."

"Mister," said the Scandinavian sailor, stepping forward, pointing to leeward, "der iss-a steamer."

"All hands keep handy. Tregenna come to the poop," said the mate.

In another moment the old international code signal N C was running aloft upon the signal halyards of the *Maharanee*—the signal of a ship in distress, or in need of assistance.

Aboard the steamer the captain and his officers stood upon their bridge; watching a sailing-clipper hove-to beneath the cold dawn-sky, apparently with something wrong aboard her.

"Queer! She doesn't see our pennant," said the captain. "There must be something pretty much the matter over there."

And to the quartermaster in the wheel-house he said:

"Helm up. Head for her weather quarter. . . .

"Ah, there she goes!" he added. "N C—I thought so! Steady your helm, there," he said, watching the flags upon the halyards of the *Maharanee*.

A few minutes later a boat lay under the quarter of the clipper; and her second officer, meeting Trefusis, was taken to the cabin; there to hear in few words the story of the mutiny.

"All right, sir. I'll take your wounded man off. We've a first-rate doctor, an' he'll soon be fixed up. My skipper will spare you one of our junior officers and what men you need to take you in," said the steamer man when Trefusis was done.

The steamer man returned to his vessel; Jim Carey lying upon a donkey breakfast in the boat's stern-sheets; and the boat, speedily returning, brought off the steamer's sixth mate and three hands to replace Barlow, Johnson and Carey.

Trefusis sent a letter to the owners of the clipper with briefly told tidings of the happenings aboard their

ship; sending also the papers and effects of the skipper and the second mate, together with the sea-chests of the dead men. Before Carey was taken to the steamer's boat he handed him a letter.

"That's for my wife, in Bude, Carey. I want you to be sure to send it to her, will you?" he said.

Jim Carey grinned up into the mate's face.

"Mister, I ain't never been nothin' but a dawg till you says to me, 'Lower away them t'gallant 'alyards.' I'm a-goin' to give that there letter to yer missus wiv me own 'ands."

In the barroom of the Haven Inn, in the seaport of Bude, there was gathered a company of men, standing about a fellow who sat cross-legged upon the bar; eagerly listening to what he was saying. He was a queer little fellow who limped heavily on one leg; a man who in indefinable ways seemed to whisper of the open roads of the oceans.

"Yus," he said, "I give the lydy the letter this arternoon, jest as quick as I 'opped offen the coach. An' she says to me, 'Ere, sailor, 'old me byby w'ile I reads my Joe's letter—jest like that."

Cross-legged, a mug of ale in one hand, a pipe in the other, he looked from one to another of the company before him.

"'Ow did it 'appen? 'Ow does things 'appen? W'y, it 'appened along o' a sailor's wantin' to wet 'is w'istle wi' rum. That's 'ow it 'appened, mateys."

They plied him with questions; for the tidings of the mutiny aboard the *Maharanee* had been the talk of the town for a day before this little limping sailor had appeared upon the hilly streets of Bude, questioning the passers-by—

"Matey, w'ere does Mr. Trefusis' missis 'ang 'er 'at?"

"Well," he continued, "the second mate 'e goes an' gets gay wiv a big chap called Tregenna, an' Tregenna 'e lands 'im one blink on th' bloomin' jaw—fixes 'im for keeps. 'E jest lay there wi' the blood a-ooging out on 'is mouth an' the scupper-water flowin' all about 'im. Tregenna's got a fist on 'im like when a spanker boom swings over."

The men about him looked from one to another, talking of Amos Tregenna and recalling old pranks of his of by-gone days.

"Mind the time he swam on the up-current to Maer Reef? And back again, too?" asked one.

"Aye, and mind the time he swum off to that Fleet-wood tramp that piled ashore at Boscastle? An' took a line aboard an' saved her crew?"

"I mind that well. Too bad his old dad was such a crazed fool! That's where Amos got the wild streak in him."

"Fill up the gentleman's mug, will 'ee, Mr. Pentire?"

Pentire, the tavernkeeper, filled up Jim Carey's mug.

"'Ere's luck to the old *Maharanee*—a fine, dandy clipper as ever went sailin'! Drink 'er down," said Jim Carey, cross-legged upon the bar.

They plied him with questions, gathering at first hand tales of a home-come sailor; tales growing ever more fanciful with good ale in his stomach, and the delight of simple men in telling old tales over.

"'Hashes to hashes, dust to dust,' says Tregenna, solemn as a bloomin' devil-dodger from the missions to seamen; an' they let 'em all go over the quarter rail to Davy Jones an' old Mother Carey."

"Fill his mug, Mr. Pentire. His mug's empty.

Yes, mister, and what did they do when Tregenna killed the second mate?"

"W'y, they did jest wot they'd do fer you an' me if we was to go killin' a lot o' 'armless little ossifers—they put 'im in irons an' locked 'im up."

Pentire, calling to them that closing time was come, the company departed; the little sailor, with Pentire's permission, curling up upon the bare boards in a corner of the room, snug from the weather.

When morning came a man entered the Haven Inn.

"Where's that sailor fellow?" he asked.

Pentire called to Jim Carey, who was across the road watching the ducks swim in the tiny river that flows through the town of Bude.

"Fellow, I'm skipper o' the ketch *Twin Brothers*, an' bound for London River. I want a hand. What d'ye say to signing on wi' me?"

Jim Carey went to sea with the ketch *Twin Brothers*, staying with her voyage by voyage; enjoying the novelty of the coasting-trips.

Each time she made her moorings in the Bude Canal, men at the bar of the Haven Inn gave him ready hearing and good ale; listening to the story of the mutiny aboard the clipper *Maharanee*.

In a little house at the end of Morwenna Terrace Judy Trewarne hid her face on the hard bosom of her fanatical mother, crying; her mother saying,

"Judy, no gal o' mine could love such a son o' Belial as that Amos Tregenna has shown himself to be. Thank God, gal, that he went to sea to show you what he was. Cease your wicked tears an' be righteous."

It was an overcast day of January when the *Maharanee* came winging homeward to the Bristol Channel; the channel waters smooth and cold; the Winter air

crystal clear; each field and house and hedgerow of the land distinct from far at sea. Beside her wheel stood Joe Trefusis, skipper of the white-winged clipper now, and, at his side, his big hands upon the wheel-spokes, Amos Tregenna. Putting his telescope down, Trefusis spoke to the helmsman.

"It all looks as it used to look, Tregenna. I can see the houses on the hill, and the masts of coasters at the canal moorings. I hope a wind comes soon. There's smoke from my chimney, lad."

Tregenna looked shoreward.

"I'll not see home, sir—a murderer they'll call me. There is no smoke by any chimney for Amos Tregenna now. I'd like to see Judy once, and tell her how it was, before they take me."

Trefusis, at the helmsman's side, looked to the town upon the hill; thinking of his wife, and of his child; wondering how it would feel could he not see them when the ship came to her port.

Night, calm, with no wind, with no ripple on the water, fell upon the channel; a bright night, filled with many stars; cloudless and serene; far away the shore-lights blinking, as though nodding to the side lights of the home-bound clipper.

At midnight, when eight bells was struck and the watch changed, the mate called the muster of the hands beneath the bridge-head.

"Murray?"

"Here, sir."

"Johanssen?"

"Here, sir."

"Heubert?"

"Here, sir."

"Tregenna? Tregenna? Where's Tregenna? See where Tregenna is, one of you."

Finishing the roll of the two watches, he asked again—

"Tregenna?"

The skipper came upon the bridge, listening to the roll of the sailors; the last roll ere home should be reached.

"That's queer, sir," said the mate. "I guess he's glad to be so close to home again, and grown careless; and lies asleep."

Joe Trefusis made no reply; starting unconsciously as, far away, he saw the blinking lighthouse on the breakwater at Bude—blinking as though to welcome home across dark waters a home-faring sailor; blinking as though it knew of secrets guarded in that night upon the sea—tales written in men's lives under the watching stars.

"Tregenna? Where's Tregenna?" called the skipper of the *Maharanee*; looking as he spoke toward the shores of Bude; as though to read a secret in that blinking light upon the breakwater. There was no reply.

"'E's drowned 'isself to save the 'angman a job—that's wot!" muttered one sailor to another, down in the gloom upon the clipper's deck.

"Look for Tregenna, some of you," said the mate, while, below the bridge, all hands waited for the relieving of the wheel.

The hands returned from looking for Tregenna.

"Gone overside to Davy! Gone overside when he was close to home. Why not have waited?" said a sailor.

"Aye, waited for the bloomin' 'angman! Would *you* 'ave waited for the bloomin' 'angman?" murmured another.

"Men," said the skipper of the *Maharanee*, "is there anything you want me to do? Shall I put a boat over and look for him?"

"I ain't seed 'im since I don't know when, hours past maybe—hours an' hours," said a sailor of the port watch.

"Anything you want me to do? I'll do anything you wish me to," said Joe Trefusis.

"'E's gone to fool the bloomin' 'angman," muttered a man from the shadow of the mizzen shrouds.

"What do you think, sir?" asked the skipper, turning to his mate, the steamer man. "Is there anything that we can do?"

"I think you're a most unlucky ship, sir!" said the steamer man, adding: "I see nothing you can do. The weather begins to look dirty. I'd make for port. She can be at moorings by the drawbridge in the forenoon watch."

The wind, in light airs, was coming from sou'west; the *Maharanee*, her skysails set, gliding from the coast; making to round Hartland Point; her course fair for Avonmouth, and home to Bristol.

"Relieve the wheel and lookout," said the mate; Joe Trefusis, at his side, looking long at the breakwater light, now growing farther and farther away; blinking sleepily over the sea; as though, its secret kept, it did not longer care to remain alight.

The wind freshened as the night wore on, and by dawn a fine breeze was blowing; the *Maharanee* sweeping up-channel, graceful as a swan, swift as a fleeting gull, the cold dawn upon her trucks, her skysails, her

wet hull; the dull brown waters of the channel rushing by her; her crew gazing gladly shoreward—scenting the fields, the sweetness of the ridges of the landward hills; contentedly sniffing the scents of the west country.

“’E fooled the bloomin’ ’angman—an’ it’s a-goin’ to blow above ’is grave if I ain’t much mistook,” said a sailor on the fo’c’sle head of the home-coming clipper.

It was a gray dawn, the wind coming in fresh from the Atlantic. Toward the shore by Morwinstow a man swam through the sea; his arm swinging in rhythm regular, unbroken and tirelessly strong. He seemed to come from the open channel, as though thrown from some ship and left to swim ashore; if swim he could. Reaching the shore, climbing upon a ridge of rock, he turned to survey the sea behind him; drawing long breaths, scanning the horizon, and looking long toward the channel between Lundy and the main land. Turning his back upon the sea, he strode inland, walking fast, as though in haste for the accomplishment of some hardset purpose.

All the morning he walked onward, keeping inland, following no road; but staying close to hedges along the coast-line; and toward evening, came to the neighborhood of Poughill, where, climbing deep into the side of a time-blackened straw stack, he lay down to rest, sleeping in snatches, and awakening to peer at the fields about him, and at the sky above, across which, from sou’west, clouds were flying; bringing from seaward a chill drizzle, and misty weather in which he could see but a little distance.

Toward nightfall, leaving the shelter of the straw stack and keeping to the cliffs, he walked swiftly through the mists toward Bude; the sea wind sobbing

about him, the sound of the Atlantic surges borne past him far inshore.

In the Haven Inn sat the skipper of the ketch *Twin Brothers*, sipping at a mug of ale. Beside him the town policeman, Will Pengelly, a large fat man important in blue uniform, also sipped a mug of ale. Nodding above his mug, the skipper of the coaster spoke.

"'E left me at Bristol; the best man I ever 'ad wi' me aboard the *Twin Brothers*! There was a big Indiemán with blue Peter at her fore, and he got itching feet at sight of her.

"'I wants ter see wot it looks like outside,' 'e said, 'I'm tired o' these 'ere coastin' trips wot gets a man no place.'

"I 'ad to pay 'im off an' let 'im go. He came aboard to say 'So-long' just afore the Indiemán, the *Bencoolen* she was, hauled Peter down and went out to the river. I saw her anchored off Barry Roads as I came down-channel; waiting for something, I suppose. A queer little chap, 'e was."

The wind was crying mournfully without; and men, entering from the night, rubbing their hands and shaking the wet from their jackets, joined in the conversation at the bar; sipping brown ale, licking their lips, blowing the foam from their beer.

The door opening, the men gathered there looked up to welcome a newcomer; to bid a neighbor to take a drink with them—and fell suddenly silent; as though a cold blast from the open door had chilled their bones.

Will Pengelly, his face flushed with good ale, stepped forward.

"Amos Tregenna, where be you come from, lad?"

he asked of the man, who, opening the door, had allowed the chill wind to blow upon the gathered company.

Tregenna, weak from a long swim in cold salt water, from a long day in the open without food, his face white, his eyes full of a light that none there could fathom, or attempt to fathom, walked to the table; seating himself beside it, his hands quivering a little, his head bowed.

Stepping forward, Pentire placed before him a mug of steaming liquor.

Amos Tregenna, looking up into Pentire's face, pushed away the liquor.

"Have ye a bite o' bread and cheese?"

Old lady Pentire ran to her pantry, returning with a plate piled high with bread and cheese, cold beef in big slices, and fresh-baked saffron cakes. Nodding his thanks to her, Tregenna fell to upon the food, eating ravenously; the others watching him, wide-eyed and silent; waiting for what might come next. Will Pengelly stood above him, an old playfellow in from sea; a lad with whom he had fought, and swum, and pulled an oar of Summer evenings on the Bude Canal.

"Amos, where be you from?"

Tregenna, looking up at him, replied:

"Let me see Judy. I'll tell ye when I'm done wi' that." He spoke low, so that none save Pengelly heard the words.

"Will 'ee surely and for certain come back again, Amos? There's trouble afoot over ye, ain't there?"

"I'll be back—soon back," said Tregenna, and, rising, looked for a moment about the gathered company; searching the faces of old playfellows.

Leaving the inn, the wind blowing noisily about him,

he went swiftly up the hill toward Morwenna Terrace.

At a house at the far end of Morwenna Terrace a little maid opened the door to the night, and looked up at the face of a big, red-bearded man above her.

"Where's Judy?"

The little maid let him in, opening a door from the narrow hall way, saying:

"I'll tell Judy. She's upstairs."

Tregenna, standing at the window, peered out to the night's darkness. He did not hear the door when it opened, and a girl with dark eyes and long black hair stepped into the middle of the room. They stood so for a while, Tregenna staring at the night without, seeing only a void; the girl standing behind him, gazing at him, silent, her eyes frightened, her lips half-parted; as though she sought deep breaths that would not come.

Suddenly, turning, Amos faced her, his eyes upon hers; his lips fast closed; his hands at his sides, and his head a little bowed.

"Is it true, Amos?" she whispered.

"What true?"

"Are you a murderer? You didn't want me?"

His head drooped lower; his eyes upon her face; her eyes moist, her face wet.

"I wanted you."

"Your word?"

"I want you yet."

The outer house-door opened; the sea wind, crying by, shaking the chimneys and driving the mists inshore.

The door of the room opening, a woman entered, staring at them; her eyes growing suddenly hard, her face stern, her hands clenched.

"Tell him to go, Judy."

"I want you yet," he murmured; his face as the ridges of the moonlit sea.

The woman, her eyes aflame, stepped between them; her fingers driving the nails into her palms.

"Go."

Tregenna turned, and, stepping from the room, opening the outer door to the wild sea-weather, was lost in the night.

"Pray to the Lord. Thank Him for your deliverance," said the woman, her eyes scorning the tears upon her daughter's face; the girl hearing only the outcry of the night wind wailing by, shaking the chimneys.

The door of the Haven Inn opening, the same man entered.

"I'm come."

The company gathered there leaned forward, looking at him, his clothing soaked with the weather; his face as the sea-tops.

Stepping forward, Will Pengelly spoke.

"Amos—" his words cut short by the distant rumble of a rocket, the men about them leaping from their seats, springing from their places at the bar, shouting—

"The lifeboat—run, lads—the lifeboat!"

The houses on the hills of Bude became suddenly bright with many lights; the voices of people shouting to one another; forms running through the mists, hurrying across the little bridge toward the lifeboat house.

Lifeboatmen were at their places, garbed for the battle, their faces as rocks seen by starlight—set, expressionless; the roar of distress rockets continuous now; men's eyes filled with strange light—light unfathomable; children of the sea come to the struggle with her insatiable hunger.

The sound of horse-hoofs was heard; Tom Porcot, the driver of the Holsworthy coach, lashing his horses to a gallop; galloping up the hill, to the downs by the cliffs. Voices crying!

"Where is she?"

"Maer reef."

Voices whispering low, women's voices, and hard voices of age-bowed men.

"She's lost!"

"She's gone."

"No rocket can reach her there."

The life-saving crew were gone, the life-boat gone—lost in the night; the life-saving crew, with the rocket apparatus, to the cliffs above Maer Reef—the life-boat to the face of the sea, outer darkness.

"No use! It's all no use. The lifeboat can't come to her. The rockets can't reach her. She's gone—gone wi' all hands! God!"

Upon the top of a huge flat rock a woman stood, her figure hidden in the dark. Above her, high upon the cliffs to the northward, the life-saving crew sent useless rockets seaward.

Aware suddenly of a presence near her, she peered at a great man who stepped to the face of the rock; hearing his voice, distinct in a lull; the rock sheltered from the wind's full fury by a ledge beyond it.

"'Our rock,' she called it. It was here I give her my word. It's here I'll show her."

She crouched, terrified, sensing some dreadful thing that was to be; unseen by the man who stood so close beside her, she watched while he unwound a coil of line from his great shoulders; watching while he made the line's end fast about the rock ledge; watching while he tossed his clothing from him; his skin white as marble,

ghostly white, terrible as death—his arms, huge arms, upraised a moment above his head, as though he spoke to some being invisible beyond the clouds.

In a moment he was gone; the woman feeling the rope pay out, slowly, from that long coil upon the rock's flat face. Falling upon her knees, she hid her face from the night's dread darkness, her hair a cloud about her shoulders, her body shaking.

Upon the cliffs, a lad arrived, breathless from swift running.

"The coastguardmen—give it 'em quick!"

A coastguardman took from his hand a piece of paper, holding it to a lantern's light; suddenly shouting—

"Tregenna's gone to her from the flat rock."

Men ran, shouting, hurrying, breathless, climbing down the face of the cliffs by a narrow pathway; coming to the surface of a flat rock, beneath which, in a little bay, a tiny sheltered haven, the water was deep without great rollers running shoreward.

"Can he make it?" asked one.

"Many's the time he's made it in fair weather," answered another.

"Tide's right. If he can get out to the up current it'll carry him right to her," said Pengelly. "I've swam it with him in fair weather."

"Amos was the best swimmer on the Cornish coast," said another.

Hidden against the ledges, a woman crouched; her hair wind blown; her ears wide to a calling voice, low through the night wind's fury—

"I want you yet."

"He's made it!"

From the ship upon the reef of Maer new signals

flashed; and, seizing the rope, men ran with it to the cliff-top; making fast to it a stouter line, and signaling to the crew of the wreck to haul in.

Soon the breeches-buoy was traveling to and fro above the rollers; fetching ashore men who stumbled as they landed, beaten by the wind and sea. They brought them all ashore, sailors, mates, and master last of all—a man whose head was bowed, whose feet were unsteady as from great horror.

“What ship?” they asked the rescued sailors.

“*Bencoolen*, Bristol for the Indies,” said a little fellow, who, looking at faces about him, cried—

“Well, you don’t say?”

“The *Maharanee* went in as we come out,” he said. “I seed ’er. They lost old Red-’Ead comin’ up the channel. ’E went overboard.”

A man, drawing ’him aside, spoke in his ear; the little fellow looking up into his face, incredulous.

“I never arst,” he said. “I seed ’im come aboard an’ never arst wot come of ’im—my Gawd!”

Men gathered about the skipper of the lost *Bencoolen*, listening to slow words he spoke.

“He came aboard with a big sea, and must have been smashed upon the hatch coamings; for he was carried outboard by the next, the rope trailing all across the deck. We tried to haul him in. We couldn’t. We had to cut the line. My good God!”

A man, unnoticed, a new arrival with nothing to distinguish him from other men there, passed amongst the people on the cliff, hearing what they said, but himself silent.

The little fellow saw him.

“Mr. Trefusis, ’e’s gone, sir. Tregenna’s gone.”

The other turned away, walking from amidst the

people on the cliff, now starting townward with the rescued crew. As though at home upon the windy cliffs of Maer, he went swiftly through the gloom, and, coming soon to a narrow pathway, descended it; the little fellow at his heels.

A woman, unseen, her hair loose about her face, crouched beside them.

"Mr. Trefusis, my pal Bill Murray says to me, 'You watch that there Tregenna—'e's one o' they 'oly buggars.' Wot is a 'oly buggar, Mr. Mate?"

The sea-wind bore his words away, softening with its own strange music the harshness of the little sailor's voice; mingling his words with other words, that seemed to drift across the dark night sea—

"I want you yet."

SHORE ROADS OF APRIL

WHAT do I see and hear of an April morning?
Many a ridge and furrow, headland and
bay,
Many a ship bound seaward, white at dawning,
Many a young lad singing a ship away.

Faces I see, ah, there were a' many women!
All wreathed in their gossam hair, with waiting lips,
And there were eyes ashine, and tears a-brimming,
And there were lads who followed the calling ships.

I see them yet, long roads by the sea cliffs wending,
I hear the songs of birds, sweet flowers I smell,
I hear a lad who whispers of love unending,
I hear the roll of the shoreward running swell.

A little silk scarf, a pair of earrings swinging,
A silver ring, an indolent peacock fan,
Down at the foreshore cold iron ship bells ringing,
And laughing lips on an outbound sailorman.

What do I see and hear of an April morning?
Many a ridge and furrow, headland and bay,
Many a ship bound seaward, bright at dawning,
Many a young lad singing a ship away.

THE HELMSMAN OF THE *STAR*

UPON the end of an old wharf whither to-day no ship, dropping cork fenders over her side, comes to moorings, the old man told me his story; a man who stared at me from sunken eyes, his voice a wind murmur, his accents mingling strangely with the lap of water amongst the piles, his face continually turning toward the horizon of the south.

"I was helmsman of the *Star* that night," said he.

"*That* night?" I asked, for the *Star* is an old story on the sea.

"Aye! *that* night," he answered.

A gray gull dipped past us, flying southerly, the eyes of the old sailor following it.

"I'm no flying-fish man," said he.

"Nor I," I replied.

Flying-fish sailors are they who, when wild weather is upon the sea, go to their bunks under the pretext of sickness, sprain, or bruise.

"When I was a boy aboard the old *Balclutha* a foremast hand jumped from her lee railing to a cake of drifting ice alongside her and, bracing his feet, shook bare fists at her as she passed by, cursing her for having taken him to sea."

"A shanghaied landsman?" I asked.

"Aye! Shanghaied; clerk in a shoe store near the water-front. He cursed the old *Balclutha*, his face whiter than the ice he stood upon, the wind drowning his voice, though you could tell that he was cursing

her. The sea birds hovered near him. The ice blink enveloping him, we saw him no more."

"Tell me about the *Star*," I said.

The old man's eyes were lit with water lights, filled with green reflections. "She was bound for Chiloe, making westerly south of the Diegos. I was at her wheel, a freshening breeze taking her along at her fifteen knots," said he, and paused.

"It was one of *those* sort of nights," he continued. "You've seen them?"

I nodded.

"She was a good ship to steer," said the old sailor, gazing southward.

"I played with her, listening to the roar of the seas that swept her fore-deck when I luffed; seeing, in my fancy, the high, white water at her weather bow, the green twists in her wake. I knew how lovely she would look were daylight on her, but it was night, and her beauty was a hidden thing. I sang to myself. I was young then. The mate came to stand beside me, staring at the compass card. With him to watch me I steered her carefully, not luffing her at all, keeping her head away from the great seas, and her fore-deck dry.

" 'A fine ship to steer when she gets it this way,' said the mate, his voice pleasant upon the wind.

" 'A fine ship, sir,' I answered him, holding her very steady on her course.

" 'Don't let her luff,' said the mate, his pipe glow lighting his eyes so that it was as though the eyes of a bodyless man looked up at me.

"I did not see him again. He went to the bridge, leaving her to me. I played her along that noisy sea south of the Diegos, the wind freshening, and the

old *Star* lifting high to the swell, the weather continually more murmurous about her."

The eyes of the old sailor glowed with green lights, as though seeing those waters beneath the Southern Cross.

"She was beginning to take water. I could hear the thunder of the seas along her deck. Once I heard a crackling, abrupt sound, as though the edges of a continent dropped into the devouring sea. Ice. I didn't like that, wishing the mate would take sail off her, but soon, hearing it no more, laughed at my timidity. I gave her a touch of lee helm, and let her luff, smiling to hear the sea rumble along her main deck as I did so.

"I seemed to hear the mate's voice say, '*Don't let her luff.*'"

"Look at the gulls! They hover close to the water," cried the old man, rising to stare at the sea fowl screaming by.

He stood up, a bent old man, his beard white, his eyes upon the inshore waters, his hands twitching as though he held the wheel spokes of the *Star*.

Gulls flew close by, peering at him. The old man stared at them as though defiantly—a mad old man.

"You heard of *Guiding Star*?" he asked me suddenly.

I nodded, recalling stories of the wreck of *Guiding Star*, in April, '55, the year *Red Jacket* lost three days amidst the ice, and *Champion of the Seas* lay fast in it a week.

"*I saw them,*" said the sailor, turning solemn eyes upon me.

"There were seven men from *Guiding Star*, high on an iceberg ridge; frozen stiff, their eyes pecked by the sea birds, their cheek bones bare."

I watched the sea outside.

"The berg lifted suddenly as we passed by," he continued, "and, toppling, spilled over. It broke the water to a hundred rainbows on that wintry morning. Those seven slid to the sea, all rainbow-wrapped, and very misty seeming."

"That was the end of them," I muttered, thinking of the funeral of those men of *Guiding Star*.

"No—" said the old sailor, stooping above me where I sat. "Killer whales passed by directly after, seeking their ocean nourishment."

I shuddered, wishing the old man would leave me—a man to whom the sea was old when I was young.

"She flew along the night," he cried, then grew serene, pacing the wharf, eight paces up, eight paces down, as though upon the lookout of the old *Star*.

"It wasn't my fault. *It was the sea*," he said.

Green wavelets danced below us as he spoke.

"The mate's eyes looked up at me as eyes without a body," he continued—"I sometimes see them now, in the middle of the night.

"It was cold, as those south winds are cold down there. With oilskins on, and soul and body lashings, and mittens on my hands, I was most bitter cold. Snow flew across the binnacle. She grew hard to handle. I fought her to hold her to her course; knowing that, to ease her pitching, the mate must soon take sail off her forward. She was wasting good time by her high stepping manner. Hearing a comber rumble on her deck, I knew that she must be waist-deep in water; then, faint, yet distinct, I heard the mate's whistle, shrill upon the night.

"'He's going to take a head sail off her. That will ease her, and she will fly again,' said I.

"After that I was alone, singing to myself cheerily, playing with her again, chiding her at each thump of water on her decks and hatches. Once, as though a sail blew from its bolt ropes, I thought I heard a crack, and then, at once, a scream. Knowing that no voice could reach me from the forecastle head, where, well I knew, they were taking in a jib, I laughed at my imagination, giving her a spoke of weather helm.

" 'The mate says not to let you luff, old girl,' said I. 'Keep your big nose up, well above the sea, so they can get that sail off you all dry.'

"The *Star* ran easily again, the wind still freshening.

" 'They will take off more sail,' thought I, as, in an increasing wind, she staggered to the sea, the roar of water continuing upon her.

"No one came near me. I knew that my time at the wheel must soon be up, and that a man would come to my relief. I was cheerful, singing aloud, stamping my feet. I made grimaces at the binnacle, putting my tongue out at an imagined face within the compass card.

" 'When's that fellow coming to relieve me?' thought I presently. 'I bet it's old Scot Dougal—the old whale! Why don't he step along?'

"Time passed, the *Star* ripping ahead as though grown savage, independently assertive of her personality.

" 'Ah, my beauty, would you, then?' said I, shoving the helm up.

"She flung a spray over me at the wheel, a thing I'd never known her to do before, for she was a fine ship, always dry aft.

" 'I'm your master, beauty,' said I. 'Keep still now,

while I sing.' And, so saying, sang a chorus through, aloud.

" 'Where's that old Dougal?' said I, at the end of my song. 'Why don't he come? They are long at coiling up those ropes.'

"Presently, wondering at the length of time that I was left, I called, half jestingly, 'Aye! Mister Mate, relief here, please!'

"Then, growing morose, cold, and swearing silently, I gripped her hard, steering her as an arrow on the water. She flew, the sea raging beside me.

" 'Rage, you old sea. I'm master here,' said I.

"I was a young man then.

"The *Star* staggered, the wind mightier, the mighty sea increasing.

" 'Scot,' said I aloud, 'where are you, Scot Dougal?'

"I steered into the blackness, the *Star* as cleaving through a wall; the sea, unwilling of her passage, swamping her decks. She shook, hesitating in that lash.

" 'Steady now, old lady! You are grown old,' said I, laughing at her.

"As though wrathful at my insult, she flung a spray over me.

" 'Aye, Mister Mate!' I shouted, aware that I was too long at the wheel, my arms aching, salt thick upon my face.

" 'I'll tell old Scot some things when he does come,' said I.

"The wind was hard. I wondered what was doing on the deck.

" 'Maybe they've split a sail in furling, and are getting out another from the locker. Well—let them hurry, then,' I said.

"Midnight crept in upon me. Throwing up my head, my arms aching, I breathed deep of that strong wind.

" 'I'll sing a bit,' thought I. 'That'll pass the time till they are done. Then Scot will come, and I shall go below.'

"I sang, very loud, a sort of creeps upon me.

"I stamped my feet, shouting to frighten the darkness farther from me, snow fluttering across the compass card.

" 'Scot!' I yelled, grown suddenly afraid of something.

"The ship needing my utmost strength, fear passed. A roller, raising her bow aloft, her stern deep in the water valley, my breath ceased. My hands were rigid upon the spokes, and the *Star* was as though she would never rise again. I wrenched at her wheel, heaving it hard up, and, paying off, she rolled easily across that mountain ridge that had lifted her against the sky.

" 'There! I win again,' said I.

"I was wet with sweat, my breath a mist, my body trembling.

" 'Mister Mate, relief here, please!' I called.

"I swore aloud, cursing Scot Dougal, calling that old whale all names I knew.

" 'You old man-swallowing killer! It's your trick at the wheel! Relief here!' I shouted. No one answered me; the night's great wall was about me, the gale madder. The *Star* drummed heavily along the sea.

"I heard a sea bird scream.

"The sweat upon me cold, I was exhausted.

" 'Scot! Relief here!' I cried again.

"As though we two were alone in mystery, the ship

whispered; I, knowing by her tremble, that she was all awash.

“‘If the mate don’t take in sail she’ll lose a stick, or all her sticks,’ I thought, trying to hold her to her course, but humoring the sea.

“My strength of body gone, my mind rose uppermost. No longer swearing at Scot, no longer calling to the mate, I was become a spirit of the night, steering the ship, my fellow spirit.

“Together we waited.

“Stepping from the wheel grating, holding the wheel in one hand, my knee steadying the lower spokes, reaching forward to the lanyard of the bell amidships of the cabin skylight, I beat upon it.

“There was no response.

“Again I beat the bell.

“Its clamor, awakening me from stupor, maddening me, I was again the helmsman of the *Flying Star*.

“Shouting to Scot Dougal to relieve me, I crashed upon the bell.

“Then, neither flesh nor spirit, I became an automaton of night.

“Suddenly a figure was beside me; two questioning eyes peered into my face. I had awakened the captain with the clamorous bell.

“His arm pointing forward in the dim arc of the binnacle light, his lips framing words unheard, he left me.

“The trembling ship raced beneath my confident feet.

“In a few moments I was relieved, my relief repeating the course I gave him. He did not look at me, nor I at him—two helmsmen relieving one another in the darkness of a windy night.

“Passing the chart-house, I heard voices; the second

mate was saying, 'The jib is blown away.' The captain's voice replied in words I did not hear.

"Clinging desperately to life lines, paying no heed to men who, shortening sail in a hurry, now shouted upon the gear, I battled my way to the forecandle. Without removing my oilskins or sea boots, with soul and body lashings yet upon me, crawling exhausted into a bunk, I fell immediately asleep.

"When I awoke, gray day was in the forecandle and I was alone. Conscious again of that gripping terror that had crushed me at the wheel, and rising, I stepped across the sloped forecandle deck to peer through a misty port, seeing naught save the ice covered shrouds, and, beyond them, the high, black ridges of the windward sea. Seeking one whom I could question, I went on deck. A new jib bellied to the gale as I came through the forecandle door; the wind was terrible, the sea in uproar, the ship forlorn.

"Aloft upon the main topsail yard I saw seven sailors, but no man of my own watch was to be seen. Hungry for companionship, I started aloft to help them reef that topsail, the gale holding me pressed against the rigging as she lurched to leeward. In quick dashes, as she made her windward rolls, I came at last to the spar, and stepped upon the foot-rope beside a sailor of the second mate's watch.

"That sailor, seeing me, edged quick away, as though afraid lest I come near to him.

"I shrieked a question at the fellow, who, ghastly white, stared at me from eyes of extraordinary and most baneful expression. Seeing me about to approach him, he threw an arm up, as though to ward me off.

"The second mate, upon the foot-rope beyond him,

now looked up, and, observing that the fellow was afraid of me, shouted unheard words into his ear. Then, with a look of hate, that sailor again went to tying the reef points.

"The sail reefed, they descended to the deck. Each man, in passing me, either avoided me or scowled savagely.

"The second mate hastening aft to the bridge, I, most cold and hungry, a horrid fear upon me, followed his men along the swamped deck to the forecastle.

"I entered the forecastle behind the last of them.

"They stared at me.

" 'Where are Scot Dougal and the mate?' I cried. 'Where are my watch?'

"A sailor stepped toward me then.

" 'They've drowned,' said he. '*You luffed!*' "

FLOWER CHILD

“OH, where are you a-goin’ to?” says Liza,
“I’m a-takin’ of a trip to sea,” says Pete.
“Oh, what is it that’s makin’ of you do so?”
“There is somethin’ that’s a-both’rin’ in my feet.”

“Where will I next meet up with you?” says Liza,
“You can meet me off the Horn, maybe,” says Pete,
“Or maybe on the line in the Atlantic
Where the outward and the homing clippers meet.”

“Oh, it’s hard to be a poor sad-hearted female
With a man that’s got to follow the cold sea.”
“Does you think as it’s so soft to be a sailor,
When the ice cakes rides a-cracklin’ down to lee?”

“Oh, Peter, won’t you stay and pick the flowers
That are climbing up beside the kitchen door?”
“I hears the big iron bell break out the hours,
An’ there’s buds that breaks to blossom off the shore.”

“There are flowers fairer far than lady’s slippers,
There are blossoms that are sweeter than the rose;
They break to brightest bloom beneath the clippers,—
“S’s’s’s’h—they’re whisp’rin’ now. I hears ’em,—an’
I goes.”

MOTHER CAREY'S BARN DANCE

THE black Tyne ship lay south of Hoste island, the Ildefonso rocks upon her starboard, the Diego Ramirez rocks upon her port bow.

One mile to the norrard of the black Tyne ship lay the four mast *Shenandoah*, of Maine. Both ships in a sea-mirror calm; not so much as the loftiest leech of their little main skysails lifting to any waft of wind across the silent Cape Horn sea.

To the norrard the snow clad mountains of Hoste island arose, a white wall above black water.

From the bridge of the black Tyne ship her little Welsh skipper, staring norrard and easterly, between the tall masts of the *Shenandoah*, his brows puckered, gazed shoreward.

"That there Yank four-master can sail—sail just a little bit. I fancy she can," said he to himself.

From the bridge of the tall *Shenandoah*, Tim Murphy stared between the raking masts of the Tyne ship toward the Diegos, bleak upon the sea beyond.

"That thar Tyne ship, she kin fly. I reckon she kin," said he, and bit at the end of his long mustaches.

"Get every rope aboard this packet sweated up, mister mate. Get all hands an' the cook onto them sheets an' braces—bouse 'em in!" cried Captain Murphy, and frowned at the high Tynesider.

The mate of the Yankee fly-away blew shrill upon his whistle, cocking a lean Massachusetts nose up

weather—as though he scented wind beyond the silent sea.

“A pull on them halyards! Haul in on them sheets!—straighten up them main an’ cro’jick lifts a leetle bit now,” he cried, and to himself he growled, “We’ve got to beat that Tynesider to ’Frisco.” Each Yankee sailor, a chew of the best in the pouch of his cheek, stared at the black Tyne clipper as he ran to the ropes.

“One of you sing the ‘Packet Chantey,’” said the mate, “let’s have it done right now, m’lads.”

The cook of the *Shenandoah* gave them the packet chantey to pull to the tune of; scaring the sea fowl from under her stern as he did so.

*“A Yankee ship came down the river
Blow, boys, blow,
A Yankee ship and a Yankee clipper
Blow my bully boys, blow.”*

“Tim, my love,” said Mrs. Tim Azalea Murphy, “I wish you’d have them men not make such a din. How do you reckon I will ever catch a bird to trim my hat with?”

Mrs. Tim Azalea, leaning over the after end of the taffrail, which aboard the *Shenandoah* was painted white, was trying to catch a sea bird; for the feathers on her hat needed replacing, and needed it badly.

*“And who d’you think was skipper of her?
Blow, boys, blow,
And who d’you think was skipper of her?
Blow, my bully boys, blow,”*

sang the crew of the lofty Maine packet at the tops of their voices.

"Tim, my precious, did you hear what I said?" asked Mrs. Azalea.

"Azalea, them thar sheets an' braces has got to be sweated up, an' sweated good: an' you must know, my dear, that to disturb the sea birds brings any ship bad luck," replied the skipper; his voice, though firm, affectionate.

"And what d'ye think we had for dinner?"

Blow, boys, blow.

And what d'ye think we had for dinner?"

Blow, my bully boys, blow,"

sang all hands and the cook, staring at the ship from the North sea port.

"There will be no sea bird anywhere near this ship in a very little while," said Mrs. Tim Azalea, "and you ought to know better than to talk such rubbish." To herself she added, "Such a job as it was to make him fumigate this ship, too."

"A monkey's heart and a donkey's liver,

Blow, boys, blow,

A monkey's heart and a donkey's liver,

Blow, my bully boys, blow,"

cheerfully bellowed the cook of the *Shenandoah*, a man who, with a constant yearning to cook new dishes, always liked to sing the packet chantey.

"Belay all," said the mate, "for the present that will do."

"Ah," said the little Welsh skipper, on the bridge of the black Tyne ship, "that Yankee thinks he's going to whip me out to 'Frisco."

On the end of the flying boom of the black Tyne ship sat young Twinkle-Bright, the stowaway from Tyneside docks, all dressed up in yellow oilskins for the cold Horn weather; leather boots upon his little legs, a warm fur cap upon his little head. He was feeding the sea birds with dollops of pork slush to which he had helped himself from the grease locker under the forecastle head, where it was kept in a barrel for the purpose of greasing down the topgallant-masts of a Saturday morning, as is the custom of every ship at sea.

The mate took a look at Twink, seated above the sea; his little legs dangling above the motionless water.

"He knows his own business best," said the mate to himself. "I fancy I will leave him be."

From the Ildefonso rocks, from the Diegos, from the snow clad shore of Hoste island, birds were gathering to pick up the dollops of pork slush that young Twink was dropping to the sea below him. There were little blue ice birds, scintillant above a black sea. There were velvet feathered black and white Cape sea pigeons without number. There were old gray gannets and brown Cape hens and big mouse-colored molly-hawks quite innumerable. Hither and yon there hovered the big snow white albatross, very beady eyed, solemn and majestic.

The sailors of the Tyne ship, leaning on her railing, watched the flying fowl. From the taffrail of the Yankee packet Mrs. Tim Azalea cast a long line baited with a piece of pork.

"Tim," she called, "Tim!—I've got a bite at last! Get him aboard for me, please, my love."

Captain Tim Murphy hauled aboard a monstrous albatross, whiter, if such a thing were possible, than the

snows upon Hoste island. His beak was yellow. His thin legs were yellow. His small black eyes were beady and bright: bright as St. Elmo's lights upon a ship's yard arms in tropic waters.

"Now," cried Mrs. Tim Azalea, "Now when I go up Kearney street I'll show them 'Frisco gals how the gals in Boston dresses."

The King of the Cape Horn albatross, on his way from the crags of the Ildefonso rocks, toward the boom of the black Tyne ship, had taken the bait of Mrs. Murphy.

"Hold him, Tim—hold him," she cried, but cried too late. With a mighty struggle the King was gone over the sea; leaving two of his beautiful wing feathers, however, between the fingers of the *Shenandoah's* skipper.

"There's your trimmins, Azalea, an' I hope you're satisfied," said Captain Tim. "You've done your best to bring us bad luck, my love." To himself he muttered, "First fumigating to kill the rats, and now she's fidgeting them sea fowl."

"Tom," said Bloody Quayle, coiling the ropes upon the Tyne ship, "Where is that young lubber Twink? W'y ain't 'ee a'-elpin' of us?"

"Bloody," said Tom Swift, "You 'ad better 'old your breath. You may need it later."

Upon the boom of the black Tyne ship sat young Twinkle-Bright, rubbing pork grease into the sore spots where the King of the Cape Horn albatross had lost two quills.

Silence reigned aboard the black Tyne ship.

From the *Shenandoah* came the long song of "haul-away-oh" of the Yankee bosun, singing out as they sweated up her bumpkin braces—getting her in trim

for a wind of which as yet there was not any sign at all.

The moon arose, full and golden. The moon shimmered the water-tracks between the Ildefonsos and the Diegos: so that it appeared as though a wide gold pathway stretched from edge to edge of the sea.

In the center of the gold street of ocean shone the white sails of the two high clippers. They were motionless. Not a sound came from the black Tyne ship: but ever and again from the *Shenandoah* came the long clear,

"Yo—lee—yoh,—hoh—ho! Haul-away—oh!" of the hard case bosun of the packet from Maine. His song was mingled with the rattle of tackle blocks, and the rustle of the idle sails.

"I reckon she kin fly," murmured skipper Murphy, as, turning to look once more at his rival, he descended to his cabin: "but she ain't Boston built at that."

"I'll show the Kearney street gals how us Boston ladies dresses," smiled Mrs. Tim Azalea to her reflection in the cabin mirror, the two white feathers bolt upright one to either side of her hat.

From the bridge the mate stared reflectively at the ship from the Tyne: the moon-gold upon her.

Leaning over the quarter rail below him the bosun, watching the glimmer of the green starboard side-light of the Tyne ship, said to the mate above, "H'it's a queer thing to me why them sea birds is all a-follerin' her. Yankee packet's has most scraps."

Upon the forecastle head of the black Tyne ship Tom Swift, the lookout man, strolled slowly to and fro; his old pal Bloody Quayle beside him.

"Tom," said Bloody, "young Twink's a-usin' up a lot o' good pork slush on them there sea birds."

"Bloody," said Tom, "if you know'd 'arf wot young Twink knows you'd some day grow to be fit for cabin boy aboard a fishin' smack, maybe."

Upon the bridge of the Tyne ship the mate and little Welsh skipper stood side by side.

"The pork slush will soon be all gone, sir," said the mate, "then we will 'ave to use good oil to grease them topgallantmasts of a Saturday mornin'."

"That is so," said the skipper, reflectively, "Maybe you 'ad best tell young Twink not to give them sea birds any more."

At that very instant, from the chart-house companion way, his tail cocked over his weather shoulder, his two front paws upon his hips, his eyes beady and bright, stepped the bosun of the rats; coming on deck from his bunk in the 'tween decks hold.

"Go below, you lubbers, go below now," said he, stepping directly in front of the mate and the little Welsh skipper.

"Aye, aye, sir—go below it is, sir," said the mate and the little Welsh skipper; neither of them knowing what they said or why they said it; each of them supposing that he had eaten too much "dogsbody" upon the previous Sunday and was now asleep and dreaming. Each, as he stepped below, took a last long look at the canvas of the big Maine packet, at the snows of Hoste island, and at the three last white albatross just arriving over the sea from the Ildefonso rocks.

The bosun of the rats stepped carelessly down the poop ladder to the quarterdeck; looking as he did so through the open port of the second mate's room to be sure that the second and the bosun were both asleep.

Going forrard he peered into the galley, staring Solomon the sea cook full in the eye.

"Stirabout, stirabout, stirabout," said he, his two front paws upon his black hips, his long tail twitching, his bright eyes on the face of Solomon the sea cook.

"Stirabout, stirabout, stirabout,—till eight bells of the morning watch, *and don't you go on deck,*" said he.

Going to the door of the carpenter's shop, directly forrard of the galley he swung himself nimbly to the edge of the carpenter's bunk, and, with the tip of his tail, tickled Chips beneath the point of his nose, so that Chips awakened with a start.

"Stirabout, stirabout, stirabout," said he, "go to the galley and help the cook," and as he stepped over the doorsill he turned around and gazing into the astonished eyes of Chips, "be sure you shut the galley door after you," he added.

He went to the flying boom, and there took a seat upon the shoulder of young Twinkle-Bright, who was feeding the sea birds the last remaining dollops of pork slush.

There were such multitudes of sea birds that the sea was hidden by their fluttering wings, the ship encircled by them: birds ahead of her, and astern of her, above and all around her.

Twinkle-Bright, raising his left hand affectionately, stroked the mustache of the bosun of the rats. The bosun, his paws on his hips and his little eyes shining, rubbed his cheek against the boy's cheek.

"Take this bucket of slush," said Twink, "and feed the birds till I get back," as rising from his seat on the boom end he stretched his little legs and shook his shoulders, to get the stiffness out of them.

"Whistle me the tune of the 'six fat rats and one old woman with a sore left eye,' " said Twinkle-Bright,

just the first stanza so's I can dance the stiffness out of my legs. I've been sitting so long that I'm cramped."

"Aye, aye," said the bosun of the rats, and, tossing out the last dollops of pork slush to the waiting sea birds, he commenced to whistle the old tune of "the six fat rats and one old woman with a sore left eye."

"That's the way," said Twink, holding up the corners of his yellow oilskin coat to either side and dancing off toward the forecastle head, his heels and toes going all tip-tappety on the long steel boom.

"Tom," he said, addressing his old friend Tom Swift, who, engaged in an argument with Bloody Quayle about the correct method of sending a new top-sail aloft in a gale of wind and heavy sea, had not observed what was going on, "Tom, I've got a job for you."

"All right, Twink, m'lad," said the two old pals, both speaking at once, as old pals will.

"Go to the forecastle and get the fiddle and the flute. Play the tune of 'nine drowned sailors and one thirsty bar-maid,'—that will send all hands to sleep. Then come back here and don't lose any time because the pork slush is nearly all gone."

Tom and Bloody, foreseeing a night's sea music, of which they were very fond, hastened to the main deck and into the forecastle.

"Twink is up to 'is tricks," said Bloody in an undertone to his old pal.

"I know'd that as soon as I see'd him begin a-feedin' o' them birds," said Tom Swift.

Unnoticed by any of the crew, all of whom were engaged in playing a game of banker for matches, except Sails the sailmaker, who sat carving on a model of the old *Balclutha* upon which he had now been en-

gaged in all his spare time for seven years, and upon which there was yet seven more years' work ahead, Tom and Bloody entered the forecastle.

Going to his sea chest, Tom lifted the lid and brought out the old fiddle which he had stolen from the chief mate of a G. S. N. steamer when she was discharging lemons down by Fresh wharf which is by London bridge. Tom, no more than any other deep water sailor, could see harm in stealing from a steamboat man. In fact there is none. Had there been streamers in Bible times the Bible would have said so.

Softly opening the camphor wood sea chest of Scandinavian Scows, Bloody felt for the silver flute, feeling along it with tender fingers to make sure that there were no holes plugged with tobacco crumbs, as often happens to musical instruments upon a ship at sea.

In another moment the two old pals were softly playing the sad tune of the "nine drowned sailors and one thirsty bar-maid," the men of both watches gathering about and listening eagerly—for all sailors are partial to mournful music, especially be it about a thirsty bar-maid with tender longings.

"Come on, now," murmured Tom to his old pal, "orders is orders. . Let her ramble."

Softly the sad tune arose, flooding the forecastle with sweet melody; each sailor there seeing the eyes of the one thirsty bar-maid deep with tender longing, mourning above the corpses of the nine drowned sailors the remains of whose beer she would have been able to have sipped from their glasses had they lived to come ashore and spend their pay days.

Slowly the heads of the sailors of the black Tyne

ship began to nod and to droop; the two old pals, their hands and fingers moving slowly up and down and to and fro drooping their heads also, till their foreheads almost met. Soon all hands were snoring while the sad tune filled the forecastle with its sleepy melody.

"Bose," said young Twinkle-Bright, upon the end of the boom, "go and fetch Tom and Bloody. Tell them to bring the instruments."

The bosun of the rats hurried to the forecastle.

"Wake up, you lubbers. Come to life now," he cried, one foot upon the shoulder of Tom and the other upon that of Bloody, and his long tail twitching to and fro.

"Aye, aye, sir—come to life it is, sir," murmured the two old pals, rising from their seat upon the camphor wood sea chest.

"Bring the instruments," said the bosun of the rats, and so saying was gone.

"Quick!" cried Twink, as the old pals approached the forecastle head, "Quick before they all fly away again. The pork slush is all gone."

In another minute Tom and Bloody, taking their seats upon the top of the windlass, back to back, their backs a couple of feet or so apart, were drawing their fingers up and down, to and fro again. Every Cape Horn sea bird turned its head at the sound of their rising music. Every sea bird wondered whether it was perhaps going to be that tune of which they had all of them often heard from their fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers upon calm nights on the rocks and crags of the Ildefonsos, the Diegos, and Hoste island.

"Play up, lads,—play!" whispered the bosun of the

rats excitedly, dancing up and down upon the top of the windlass between the two musicians.

On the far end of the long flying boom Twinkle-Bright, seated straddle legs, was talking earnestly with the king of the Cape Horn albatross, and emperor of all lesser sea fowl.

"Very well, very well," said the king, "it's a long time since *that* tune was played, and I've often wanted to hear it. I will do as you ask."

"All ready, boys?" asked Twink, springing lightly to the top of the windlass, between the two musicians.

"Ready it is, sir, aye, aye—let 'er ramble any time you say, sir," replied the musicians.

Twink put his arm through the arm of the bosun of the rats and his restless feet commenced to go all jiggedy. His young face shining with delight, he whispered to the two old pals.

"The king will tell us when," said he. "Meanwhile, to keep them from flying away, play us the tune of 'here comes the young kid they call ramble-away,' and I will sing the song."

Instantly Tom's fingers flew, and Bloody's cheeks were puffed. Together Twink and the bosun began to sing the old sea song, while every sea bird cocked his head to listen—all wondering if it were to be the old tune of which they'd heard on moony nights along the rocks and islands of the shore.

At the high main skysailmast of the black Tyne ship the king of the Cape Horn albatross and emperor of all lesser sea fowl had called to himself the lesser kings and princes: the kings of the ice birds, of the ganneys, the petrels, the molly-hawks, and cape hens. Seated on the top, on the truck, of the main skysailmast, he gave them his orders.

"When the old tune is played," said he, "the ice birds, who are little birds, will fly to the skysails, which are little sails. The petrels will fly to the royals. The cape pigeons to the topgallantsails, the ganneys to the upper, and the molly-hawks to the lower, topsails. The albatross will go to the foresail, mainsail, and cro'jick, and the fore and afters. Be sure that every one is ready when the music starts."

Meanwhile on the windlass the bosun of the rats and Twinkle-Bright arm in arm, their feet going jiggedy, their eyes very bright with excitement were singing

*"Ramble-away, ramble-away,
Here comes the young kid they call Ramble-Away."*

The birds, obeying the orders of their various rulers, were flocking to their places amongst the rigging, and the tapered spars of the Black Tyne ship. The king of the albatross was standing on the very top, on the truck, of the main skysailmast, with the full gold moon glistening on his snowy feathers, his yellow beak, and thin yellow legs.

"Are you ready?" asked he, in a deep voice, gazing down to Twink, and the bosun, with the two musicians.

Twinkle-Bright waved an arm in reply.

"All right," he whispered to the two old pals.

"All right," said they together, back to back, the fiddle and the flute going "skee-dee—skee—deee—tootle—tootle—tootle."

Then Tom and Bloody played the old tune. Then Twink and the jet black bosun of the rats, arm in arm, waved their hats (their yellow sou'westers that is

to say) up and down in slow and rhythmic motion.

Then, amidst the rigging, and along the tapered spars, in a soundless silence the Cape Horn sea birds commenced to flap their wings. Up and down, up and down, up and down, went wings of blue, and gray, and brown, and snowy white,—wings quite innumerable; causing the lowest, the softest, most feathery of musical breezes to rise and to fall in time with the music from the big ship's windlass head: in time with the gently swaying motion of the yellow sou'westers of Twink and the bosun. Slowly the Tyne ship stole away, with the wind from their wings in her sails.

Upon the golden seaway to the norrard, ashine in the moonlight, lay the lofty *Shenandoah*: never a sea bird near her. From her decks there floated over the sea the long song of her bosun and his sailors as they again tightened her sheets and braces, all hoping for a wind,

"Yo—leeee-ho, yo—leee-yo-ho-ho—haul-away—oh!"

Every man jack of the Yankee sailors, from skipper, mate, second mate, boatswain, carpenter, sail-maker, steward, cook and sailors (the Yankee packets carried lots of sailormen and did *most* things right) to the cabin boy and the last rat in her hold, stared toward the place where the black Tyne ship had been. They saw no ship at all. They saw an ever changing pattern of white and black, and gray and blue: for sea birds encircled her with a million wings.

"What tune is that, Tim? Oh, what tune is that?" cried Mrs. Tim Azalea Murphy, her arms on the arm of Captain Tim, her hat on her pretty head, with the two white feathers upright upon it.

"H's's's's'sh," whispered Captain Tim.

"What ever tune is that?" asked the Yankee bosun of the Yankee mate.

"H's's's's'sh," whispered the Yankee mate.

"What ever tune is that?" asked the Yankee sailors.

"H's's's's's'sh," ran a low murmur all along the white decks of the moon-glimmered *Shenandoah*.

Slowly, very slowly, the black Tyne ship was gliding away.

"He'll beat me to 'Frisco," murmured Captain Tim Murphy.

"He's got the sea birds witched," murmured the mate.

Captain Tim spoke to his mate. The mate passed the word to the bosun. The bosun passed the word along. In two minutes the sailors, second mate, carpenter, sail-maker, steward, cook and cabin boy were gathered under the bridge head of the moon-lit Yankee packet.

"Men," said Captain Tim, in a quiet earnest voice, bending down toward the deck beneath him, the moon on his back.

All hands and the cook stared up at him, expectantly; moonlight in their eyes.

"Men," said the skipper, bending yet a little lower, "does any one know what tune that is?"

There was no reply.

Suddenly, from out of the booby hatch directly below the bridge, there stepped a large white rat.

The moon was in his beady eyes and on his bright white shoulders. His tail was twisted four times round his waist. He walked slowly, a little stiffly, for he was very very old, toward the crew, and, having taken his place in the very center of the line, turned his face up to Captain Tim.

"Does anybody know what tune that is, my men?" asked Captain Tim, again.

The rat, unwinding his tail from about his slender waist, crossed his arms upon his chest and looked right into the captain's face.

"Where did you come aboard?" asked the captain, in surprise, noticing him all of a sudden, "I thought this ship was fumigated before she left port."

"Modern methods—modern methods," said the last Yankee packet rat in a mournful tone of voice.

From far away where the black Tyne ship was slowly dipping below the horizon came the strains of sweet music.

His arms folded on his chest, his head cocked slightly sideways, the last Yankee packet rat commenced to jig his feet—slowly up and slowly down, with his long tail wound again four times about his slender waist. His body swayed slightly. His upturned eyes were fixed upon the eyes of Captain Tim above him.

"Dance, boys, dance," said the last Yankee packet rat, in a sepulchral voice.

One by one the feet of the mate, the second mate, the boatswain, the carpenter, the sail-maker, the steward and the cook and all the sailors began to rhythmically jig upon the bright moon-lighted quarter-deck of the tall *Shenandoah*.

"Dance, sailors, dance," said the last Yankee packet rat.

Faster went the dancing feet—shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, on the moon-glimmered deck.

His eyes fixed upon the eyes of the last Yankee packet rat, Captain Tim, bending down to watch, with

his hands on the bridge rail commenced to go shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, with his feet.

From the weather door of the chart-house came Mrs. Tim Azalea, and looked straight up at the full moon; the two white feathers in her hat.

From far off came the fading strains of music.

Mrs. Tim Azalea grasped the skirts of her stylish frock and lifted them to either side. Her feet began to go shuffle, shuffle, shuffle on the clipper's poop.

The helmsman left the wheel. He stood in front of the skipper's wife and held out the corners of his yellow oilskin coat while his two big booted feet commenced to go shuffle, shuffle, shuffle, on the white poop planking.

Far, far away glimmered the lofty skysails of the black Tyne ship as she sank from view under the sea in the westerly. The music was very faint now.

One behind another, flying from the westerly sea rim, came the returning ice birds, the cape pigeons, the ganneys, molly hawks, cape hens, and the great white albatross. They stretched in a long line, from clipper to clipper, their wings still rhythmically beating to the music of the fiddle and the flute, their necks outstretched; their eyes upon the *Shenandoah*.

After flying round and around her they commenced to settle, one at a time and two at a time, and three at a time, and presently in hundreds, upon her spars and yard arms, flying boom and spanker boom, and deck houses. The air was filled with the rustling of their wings.

"Mother Carey's Barn Dance," cried the last Yankee packet rat, his feet going faster, his eyes shining brighter, his tail coming unwound and waving above his head.

"Mother Carey's Barn Dance—and you must dance to pay!" he cried.

Faster and faster went the feet of every man aboard the Yankee packet; the skipper dancing on his high white bridge, the helmsman and Mrs. Tim Azalea upon the poop behind him.

Still the last Yankee packet rat led the dance. Still the sea birds settled.

Scarcely a whisper of music came now from the far off black Tyne ship.

Over the sea came the king of the Cape Horn albatross and settled upon the main skysailmast head of the Yankee clipper.

"Keep them dancing," said he, in a harsh voice, his bright eyes down turned to meet the upward gaze of the last Yankee packet rat.

The dancers danced, unconscious of the birds who watched them, until their feet grew weary and their heads began to nod.

Bye and bye the carpenter was fast asleep, his feet yet shuffling, though he had fallen to the deck. Bye and bye the sail-maker snored beside him. Bye and bye the mate, second mate, steward, cook, and sailors all lay on the moonlit deck, their feet still twitching in their dreamy slumbers. The helmsman fell and lay upon the poop. Mrs. Tim Azalea fell, and sat backwards against the chart-house.

Only the skipper and the last Yankee packet rat kept up the dance.

Bye and bye, fallen over the bridge rail, Captain Tim ceased dancing and began to snore.

Then, one by one, and two by two, and three by three, and soon in whole unnumbered companies, the sea birds flew toward the distant shores of the Diegos,

the Ildefonsos, and the snow clad rocks of Hoste island.

The last Yankee packet rat looking up to the king of the sea fowl nodded. The king nodded back. Majestically the king circled downward, till he was hovering above the poop of the *Shenandoah*. Like a flash of flying snow flakes the last Yankee packet rat was upon the poop. Like a flash he seized the two white feathers from Mrs. Tim Azalea's hat. Like a flash he leaped to the back of the king of the Cape Horn albatross and emperor of all lesser sea fowl. In another moment the *Shenandoah* slept alone upon the cold Horn sea.

In the cabin of the black Tyne ship the mate opening his eyes stared at the little Welsh skipper.

"My, ain't I been a-dreamin' though," said he to himself, as he rose and stole to the deck.

"Eight bells of a bright Sunday morning," cried Twinkle-Bright the stowaway, and struck the bell upon the poop above.

"Clang-clang — clang-clang — clang-clang — clang-clang!"

The awakened sailors hastened to the deck. A breeze was blowing up from the southerly.

Up to his bridge came the little Welsh skipper, rubbing his hands in his hair, and the mate came up and stood beside him, each of them watching the breeze blow up, over the southerly sea.

"He brought us luck," said the mate, as young Twinkle-Bright passed by from the poop to the quarterdeck, on his way to Sunday breakfast with Solomon the sea cook.

"That's what he did," said the little Welsh skipper, "I've seed it afore."

THE PACKET RAT

'O W would you like to be a packet rat,
Wiv' no place any w'ere to 'ang your 'at?
Wiv' two bare feet most bleedin' froze an'
wet

Aboard a clipper wiv' 'er tops'ls set?

'Ow would you like to sail the greenin' sea
Wiv' a black 'urricane a-blowin' free?
To 'old the w'eel spokes in your freezin' 'ands,
Footin' the furrows down for foreign lands?

'Ow would you like it, w'en ashore you goes,
To see the folks all drawin' back their clo'es,
Sayin', "'Ee is a sailor—'orrid thing!"
'Ow would you like to 'ear that sailor sing?

Singing upon the seas some tropic night,
Wiv' the old moon all shiny silver bright,
A shipmate's fiddle twinkin' merrily
To cheer the 'earts of sailors far at sea?

'Ow would you like to see a shipmate drown
Under goose'd tops'ls in the Easting down?
To 'ear 'im 'oller, "'Elp me! 'elp me!—Gord!"
'Ow would you like that, eh? *Man overboard!*

I'll take my lot! I'll be a packet rat!
I'll shake the tops'ls loose an' wave my 'at:

Give me a ship, my pals wot never knows
W'en death goes walkin' w'ere the night wind blows.

Give me my sea, an' I'll give thanks to Gord
For ev'ry wave as lops 'is 'ead inboard:
A-thankin' 'im fer breath, an' 'ands to bleed,
I'll be a man by Gord! the rat's 'ard creed.

THE PETRELS

THE STORY OF THE LAST CLIPPER SHIP

Associated Press Dispatch, June 28th, 1922.

New York.—

The master of an incoming vessel reports sighting a four foot model of a full rigged ship, sailing steadily along about 700 miles west of the Irish coast.

A FULL rigged ship, the sunset lights upon her, sailed northerly across the warm Sargasso sea: that sea an upheaved waste, darkly indigo, and running in high ridges before a southwest wind. Clouds sped above her, as, under full sail, she urged the waters from her bow, and tossed them, in broken cataracts, aside. Astern, above her whirled wake, their cries faint on the wind, petrels flew.

At her wheel stood a heavy set, square shouldered sailor whose searching eyes looked forth from beneath grizzled brows. Beside this helmsman stood a lad, a tall sea apprentice who, a rag of canvas in one hand, a little can containing powdered chalk in the other, was engaged in polishing the brass binnacle in front of the wheel.

The helmsman stared away toward the norrard and westerly and, catching the apprentice's eye, murmured a few words. The apprentice, turning, stared whither the helmsman stared.

"She's got her old sail on," he said, and added, "what if she's caught?"

In the chart-house, beyond the cabin skylight, visible through a port, was the ship's clock. The helmsman looking at it, spoke again,

"Four bells, son—strike!" he said, and his young companion, grasping the lanyard of a brass bell upon the skylight, struck the bell sharply, four times.

Taking his chalk can and rags, the apprentice left the poop. He paused upon the quarterdeck to stare at the darkening seas beyond the weather railing, and in a moment was joined there by the helmsman.

The wind was falling, the evening drawing in. The sea, no longer running in high ridges, seemed uncertain in which direction to run, as though unguided, undriven, by any determined wind. The sound of the water alongside was become, in a few moments, quite changed.

From the bridge the second mate stared to the sky-sailmast head above him; then, turning, gazed into the wind, south and westerly. Eager for the appearance of the mate and skipper, who sat at supper in the saloon below, he tramped impatiently forth and back, waiting to be relieved and to sate his hunger. To the horizon in the north and west, whither the apprentice and the helmsman now gazed so fixedly, he paid no heed.

His voice low, lest the officer above hear his words, the sailor spoke,

"The wind'll shift, son, and she'll be caught," he said, "I've sailed these seas a many times."

"If dirty weather's coming, Manus, it's good that there'll be a moon," said the apprentice, and added, "let's go below and eat, lest there's no time later."

They walked forward together till, coming to the midship deck house the apprentice entered the half-

deck. The sailor continued his way to the forecastle.

As the apprentice entered the half-deck door a lad who broke sea biscuit into a pannikin of coffee looked up. He was a sturdy, large-handed lad of short stature. His eyes were brown. His dense hair, black, standing erect, encircled a sea tanned forehead. His features wore the constant suggestion of a breaking smile.

"What's kept you, Petrel?" he asked.

"There's a shift of wind coming. It's going to blow," replied the other.

"Wind's fallen, hasn't it?" asked the apprentice at the table.

"It's going to blow from nor'west. Manus says so," answered his shipmate.

"Manus is wise. He ought to be a skipper," said the dark haired lad.

"I believe you'd both sooner go aloft to reef a frozen topsail than *be* the skipper, snug in his cabin below," he added, smiling.

The tall apprentice, his meal finished, arose and reaching a large glass jar from a locker placed it on the table.

He was a lean and sun browned boy of twenty years, blue eyed and yellow haired, with a slowness of speech and of movement like the deep slowness of an unchanging tide of the sea. Despite his sun tanned complexion there was in his face a suggested frailty; an absent look in his blue eyes, as though, himself perhaps unconscious that he did so, he dreamed of far off things.

"Look!" he said, gazing into the jar within which, amidst a cluster of amber weed, crawled many minute and bright colored creatures of that warm sea.

His companion laughed.

"When you're the steamer officer you mean to be you'll have no time to watch the wonders of the sea. You'll have ceased to belong," said the tall apprentice.

The short lad, placing an arm about his comrade's shoulder, gazed into the jar.

"You wouldn't really rather be in steam, would you?" the tall lad asked.

His companion's brown eyes glowed; lips and eyes alike each brightened by a smile.

"We're both petrels, old man," he said, and gazing through the open port beside them added, "but they'll clip our wings, and we'll be tamed. Sail will pass from the sea."

The tall lad returned the jar to the locker, and tossing off their clothes they prepared to roll for a time into their bunks.

From the deck without there rang a sudden quick command. Naked as day the tall lad leaped through the door; his comrade, stripped to the waist, at his heels.

Manus, meanwhile, had entered the forecastle where his fellows were already finishing their evening meal. Unnoticed by them, he took a seat at the after end of the room, and withdrawing a hunk of salt pork from the mess kit upon the table, ate rapidly. A sailor at his side turned toward him.

"Hurryin' to th' model?" he asked.

Manus, taking his pannikin from his lips, nodded assent.

"Wot'll ye be doin' wi' yer model, w'en ye git 'er done?" asked an old man, rising from the table.

Manus made no reply, but his meal finished, went

to his bunk and brought from it the model of a sailing clipper's hull.

"I've see'd men as'd spend all their dog watches for years an' years a-workin' on a model," said a sailor.

"Ye'll be w'iter nor me, w'en yer gits her done," said the old man.

Manus looked long through an open port. Then, lifting the model from the table where he had placed her, returned her to his bunk.

A moan, as of a high wind far away, sounded faint from without. At that instant the chief mate's order rang,

"All hands on deck!"

Night had fallen, and the deck was gloomed.

The ship, her canvas slatting, lurched in the trough of a listless sea. There was no wind. Darkness was becoming momentarily intenser: though a gleam, low on the horizon, gave evidence that the moon would soon arise.

A second order rang upon the ominous silence.

"Watch your helm."

Men, indistinct in the deepening gloom, their voices sharp on the mysterious hush, hastened to sheets and halyards. A sailor, bare footed, striking his foot against a ring bolt, swore as the iron clinked. Some one laughed.

There came a rush of wind, an outcry that swept beneath the hidden clouds. The sea became, in that moment, uproarious. The ship, trembling to the onslaught, lay over. Yards and spars cried aloud while sailors obeying orders but half heard ran swift along the deck.

There fell an instant's lull, and a defiant laugh rang the deck's length. As that laugh was borne away, to be heard perhaps upon some far off sea, the moon arose, breaking, sudden, through glooms of the horizon. The sea was molten, of silver and of indigo, lighted with lights that incessantly shifted. White water raced along the railing tops as the storm broke overhead. In that storm's lash, fury and loveliness, as though created for each other, now commingled. Radiance overspread all things. The ship, golden moon-light upon her, lay tremulous upon a chaotic sea where but a moment before had been calm inexpressible.

For a space the voice of man was unheard: then, at an order, stern above that universal sternness, men of an agility unbelievable leaped to the rigging, to race, ape like or snake like according to each sailor's personality, to sails doomed or already destroyed.

Sail after sail, torn to shreds, blew in long ribbons on the wind, flooded by that light upflung from the horizon by which, against the heedless face of the fast rising moon, men hastened to the mast heads.

There fell another lull, and a sailor far aloft laughed; while another, waist naked upon a spar below him, waved a clenched fist at storm and at laughter alike.

The gale drove down anew. The sea swept the deck. Spray, hurled high between her masts, gave to the ship the appearance of a tall tree grown at a waterfall's white misted foot. She seemed a lovely growth, a delicate and fronded fern, mistily growing in that windy moon gold; broken, but with power to arise anew.

Sailors, some clothed and some half clothed, de-

scended from one mast to hasten aloft upon another. The moon-lit sea became continually more marvelous; the storm wind seeming as though upbreathed from the very ocean's heart.

High in the main rigging, his white skin and back tossed yellow hair ashine, stood the tall apprentice, bare as on the midnight of his birth.

Sailors, ascending from the deck, sped by him, till one, a short, heavy set and leaping fellow, stayed a moment at his side.

The sailor, embracing a wide arc of the scintillant universe, waved an arm.

"*The sea!*" he shouted, into the ear of the naked lad, who shone like a white blossom upon a tree, in the wet mist of waterfalls.

The apprentice laughed, a shrill laugh, happy on the night.

A cloud obscured the moon. No voice was heard. The light returned, and night passed on, with song and shouting.

From racked spars they gathered in the ribbons of her sail cloth. On the boom, where pennants flew above a leaping sea, sailors labored while the bow wash thundered below them.

The ship, her yards stripped bare, lay to the blast.

On deck, half hidden in the warm Sargasso waters, men whose feet slipped upon inwashed clusters of brightly berried weed, strove for footing; their faces now uplifted to gaze at the weather, now bowed to escape the smiting of the spray.

Suddenly a light twinkled, will-o'-the-wisp like, on the deck and Chips, the carpenter, carrying a bright red lantern, hurried forward, followed by a line of crouching sailors whose trivial figures appeared like

light-pursuing animalculæ of night. The sea alternately hid and disclosed them. Their eyes gleamed. The young men laughed and shouted. An aged, waist-naked fellow, clinging momentarily to a hand rail with the full moon upon him, was garlanded about bare shoulders by a cluster of the amber weed—Sargasso weed, prettily berried, and uptossed to garland a sailor—flung to one of her children by his mother the sea.

In the abyss of night the ship, her graceful yards, her half-hidden decks, and the forms and faces of her company, shone all sea-glorious.

Chips, leading the way, disappeared beneath the forecastle head. He opened the sail locker hatch and, the sailors following him and his red lantern, passed to tenebral depths below.

In murkiness beneath the level of the roaring sea the lantern cast shadows goblin-like upon them while they sought new canvas for her wind-raped spars. For each spar whence the wind had torn a sail they dragged forth new canvas. Dust of the hold settled thick upon them. Beads of perspiration dripped to runlets upon their faces. Their eyes shone, beady, in ringlets of black. Wrestling, now in the lantern light, now in the shadows, they lifted long rolls of sail cloth to their sinewed shoulders, and so, enclasping it in hairy arms, staggered to the decks above.

A sailor leaped from the deck's smother into the shrouds, and a gantline block lashed about his shoulders, climbed, now slow, now swift, foot by foot, and ratline by ratline, toward the topmast head.

The tall apprentice, a rope lashed about him, his head level with the sailor's heels, followed aloft. The yellow rope, uncoiling from the deck to pursue him

upon his upward way, appeared in the mist, and in the wet moon gold, like a sinuous and persistent serpent arising from the rumble of the waves below—a serpent trained to obey each motion of its master: its master a man, nakedly fearless, at home in his sea Eden.

Rope and sailor swaying, the block-bearer swaying, they battled to the mast head, their heads alternately bowed and uplifted, watched by comrades who from the deck and from the lower rigging gesticulated to them and to each other, and shouted encouragements unheard.

Having attained to the summits of their windy desires they returned to the deck, where those who had watched them seized, half savagely, upon the rope's end, and deftly made fast thereto a sail.

The wave crests continually sweeping upon them, burying them waist deep, and swirling about their firm braced legs and feet, they strung along the deck to windward, and thus, rousing an old chantey, sang defiance to the frantic sea and all of her mad majesties.

Their bodies, rhythmical as were the songs they lifted, swung forth and back. Their chests heaving, they stretched forth their arms, and with knotted sinews and expanded ribs, hauled the new topsail to its appointed place at the sky-raking mast head far above them.

The gale, yelling, defiant, round the topsail, fluttered it far. The sailors made mock of gale and sea alike.

The ship tossed, waiting patiently.

The sail aloft, they followed it thither, each man racing to outdo his comrade. A hundred feet above the cauldron sea they swarmed along the rocking spar,

and shouted and sang and laughed and having bent that topsail to its jackstay returned to the deck to send aloft another—and so throughout the night.

When pallor overspread the eastern sea rim the tall apprentice, two hundred feet above the sea, lashed robands in a new main skysail. At his side toiled the square-shouldered sailor who, the robands all fast and the sail ready to set, rose upright on the foot-rope and rested a huge hand upon the shoulder of the naked lad beside him.

Thus, together, they gazed toward the breaking of the day.

Suddenly, waving an arm, the sailor encircled an arc of the watery waste,

"The sea—the sea!" he shouted.

The apprentice's lips moved. Though with the close of that long night his young body was now grown chill, his wide eyes shone.

"Ours, Manus!" he cried.

The moon paled. The stars paled. The ship, tremulous and beautiful, was become the day star of the sea. Men's cheery songs rose all about her. Lengths of yellow rope trailed in white waters beside her.

Petrels, their cries faint on the wind, circled her wake.

Many years passed. The winds above the warm Sargasso sea blew throughout those years, unchanging; now soft, now loud; now in still darks of night, now under gale blown stars. Still the amber sea weeds tossed along the ridges. Still stormy petrels flew, hovering in now widening, now narrowing, circles above indigo waters.

The sailing roads of mid ocean, uncharted and unmarked, no longer trailed by keels of many questing ships, were abandoned now to gull and whale and wind, to sky lights and to sea darkneses. Where in former years ships had wandered, tacking sea patiently, beating into head winds or biding the utterness of calms, there now lay, sulphurous above the horizons, trails of dark smoke. Steamers hastened by, waiting on no wind, heeding no current; destroying, with churning propellers, sea beauties beneath their wallowing feet.

Alone upon those wastes, equally a part of the sea with the lights and shadows upon it, crept the last clippers; their canvas as much a part of the watery world as, also wind-hovered 'twixt the clouds and sea, were the spread wings of the lonely gull. Sighted by men upon the decks of steamers they were stared at by those men, curiously, as in past years their own sea-roving companies had stared to watch the spouting of the whale.

"Yon's one o' they old wind-jammers," a deck hand would say in the dog watch, as canvas, flashed against the crimson of the sunset, rose from a purple sea. Then the steamer hands would gather in the bow, to watch a clipper pass—phantom like, dim against the wakening stars.

Upon an evening when at fading of sunset stars were awakening, a steamer, shoving the waters from her squat bow, passed northerly along the edge of the Sargasso sea. From her bridge the mate, a short and dark-haired man of near to middle age, stared with unseeing eyes across the waters ahead. From the

distant expression in his eyes it was evident that he saw in the fading daylight the seas or shores of some well-remembered vision.

A breeze, light from sou'west, ruffled long rollers.

A bell clanged, and the helmsman, an aged and white-whiskered sailor, relieved at the wheel, walked slowly forward.

Save for the wash about the advancing steamer, and the dull reverberations of her engines, there was no sound.

Presently, while the mate yet gazed over the darkening seas ahead, a voice cried from the bows where, motionless, with his eyes upon the rim of the sea, the lookout man stood.

Men from the forecastles below him immediately crowded to the deck.

Under the awakening stars there flashed, now white as the sea crests, now tinted rosy by the western sky, a speck so small as to be all but invisible upon the northern horizon. That speck rose and retired again, now lifted high to a swell, now lost in the hollows.

The steamer hands ascended to the forecastle head and crowded into the bow; foremost amongst them the old helmsman.

"Jake," queried a lad whose gaze was fixed upon the far off sail, "you was in them style ships, wasn't you?"

The old man stared for a moment at the rusted funnel whence a cloud of smoke and cinders floated down the wind, hiding the stars away. Then, with a slow stare, he looked her tub-like length along, and spat into the sea.

The sunset faded. The stars possessed the night. At the stumpy masthead of the tramp a wan light

gleamed—a dying star, pallid and perplexed beneath the scintillant dome above.

The men upon the forecastle head, no longer able to discern the sail, returned below to their quarters.

“Jake,” said one of them, “sing us one o’ they old sailin’ chanteys.”

“Aye, sing us a chantey, Jake,” cried another.

The old man, seated upon a sea chest the handles of which, after the fashioning of a by-gone day, were made of rope grummets, looked about him, a look half patience, half desire, upon his face.

“Come on, now, Jake, an’ sing us one o’ they old chanteys,” said a stoker, wiping the sweat and coal dust from his lean shoulders.

The old man looked from side to side of the rust-ribbed forecastle: then, rising, stepped to an open port and spat into the sea. Speechless he passed to the deck, and again ascended to the forecastle head.

The lookout man, seeing him arise, pointed into the glooms ahead, where, winking upon an indiscernible sea, there glimmered now and again a light.

Gradually the pyramidal canvas of the sailing ship became outlined against the dark dome of the night.

On the steamer’s bridge, at a word from the skipper, the mate opened a signal locker and lighting a flare held it high over the sea toward the sailing vessel. A greenish glow lit the rolling funnel of the tramp and the cindery smoke trail blowing overhead, and shone upon the dazzled faces of the mate and skipper.

The barque, beyond the radius of the flame, was momentarily hidden from the blinded eyes of those upon the steamer’s bridge, then, barque and steamer bow to bow and parallel upon the sea, an answering

flame broke out and each lay illumined in the pale flame.

The stars were extinguished. The sea was become a void. The steamer loomed, a huge, slow motioned creature, with breadth and sides that trembled as from pain within. The lower canvas of the sailing vessel shone, phantasmal, lovely as the wings of some home flying bird. Now dipping as the sea dipped, now lifted to the swells, she dallied—as a free creature at home and in her chosen element.

The flares died. The mystic sea was lit with phosphorus. Night, no longer indiscernible, became a magical field of hid flowers, above which a wind sighed. The lights of the barque passed astern, and commingling with the sea lights, faded away. Night grew intenser. Clouds hid the stars. A swell arose, long and uneasy, to hint of winds approaching from afar.

The steamer, her wan light the lone star of the night, rolled steadily northward.

On the forecastle head of the barque a man walked to and fro, keeping lookout. Watching the lights of the steamer fade away he watched also the wide sea circle ahead. Half-hourly, bells broke musical across the sea, telling the watch away. When eight bells rang clear from poop to forecastle head the lookout man stayed his walk to cry, his hands cupped at his bearded lips,

"All's well, sir, and the lights are bright!"

Then, relieved by one of his comrades, he walked aft to report again from the quarterdeck.

The mate, his contented voice careless, grunted a reply; then, as the old sailor started forward bent toward him,

"Manus!" he called.

The old man, stopping, looked into the darkness above.

"Go take a look at the skipper," said the mate.

Manus passed beneath the break of the poop, and opening an alleyway door stepped into the saloon. Striking a match he held it high before him, and thus made toward a door upon the starboard side. When the match went out he bent to listen at the keyhole; then, hearing no sound, softly entered.

A gimbal-hung lamp, turned low, dimly illumined the little cabin. Through an open port the cool night breeze blew in. Overhead, inverted above the skipper's pillow that he might see at any time of day or night upon what course his vessel sailed, hung a tell-tale compass. The unadorned bulkheads were white, the ceiling white, the white scoured deck planks bare.

Upon a narrow bed but little wider than a bunk lay a man who in silence motioned to the sailor to approach.

His long fair hair hung all about his forehead, adding by its brightness to the pallor of his face. His blue eyes shone like lights that stolen from a morning sky now trembled in the nearness of extinguishment.

His hands upon his booted knees, his wrinkled countenance brown above that sunken face, the old man gazed speechless into his skipper's eyes.

After a silence, during which each seemed to search the face of the other, the skipper's lips moved, and Manus bent close to catch the whispered words.

His voice deep as the sound of ice fragments breaking from a melting berg he made reply,

"She's nigh finished, sir."

The skipper turned to a clock upon the bulkhead beside him; then, smiling, spoke again,

"Go below, Manus," he said.

The old man made no reply.

The skipper's eyes shone. He lay unutterably still, the sailor above him equally still; the great repose of weakness meeting the great repose of strength, as when brother meets brother each knows the other's heart.

Presently, his words scarcely audible, the skipper spoke again,

"Remember that night?"

The old man nodded.

"They'll need you if it blows," the skipper whispered, his wide eyes wandering, as though he watched the edges of a field of dreams.

"Good canvas is all she's got that's good," he whispered again, after a long silence.

The old man made no reply, seeming to listen to a wind that whimpered far beyond the port.

"Go below," said the skipper.

For a moment the sailor remained motionless; then stared quickly through the open port, turned, and was gone.

He passed from saloon to quarterdeck, and made his way to the forecastle.

In the forecastle a lamp turned low threw dim shadows on the still forms of sailors in their bunks. Manus turned the lamp higher. No one stirred. Taking a seat upon a chest at the after end of the forecastle he bent to gaze at the lovely model of a full rigged ship that rested in chocks upon a bench between the table and the after bulkhead. Reaching backward he turned the lamp yet higher, and a sailor,

startled to wakefulness by the light upon his face, leaped from his bunk to the deck, and while yet but half awake groped for his clothing.

"All right, son,—turn in," said the old man, looking up at him.

Others, awakening at the sound of voices, bestirred themselves.

"What is it?" asked one.

"'Tain't eight bells yet so soon again is it?" another asked.

"It's old Manus with his model," said a third.

The man on the deck lit his pipe and returned to his bunk.

"Where ye been, old barnacle?" he asked of Manus.

"Why didn't ye come forrard wi' the rest of us?" asked another.

"Finish yer model an' set her sailin'," said a young sailor.

"What kept ye, Manus?" asked the smoker.

"I was with the Old Man," said Manus.

"Is he better yet?" asked the young sailor.

"No, nor never will be," replied another.

"He's low, boys," said Manus, his deft fingers busy in the model's skysail rigging.

"Ye'll finish her to-night?" asked the smoker.

Manus placed the model upon the table. She was about four feet long, her spars almost touching the deck above her. Her standing rigging was taut, her running rigging rove, her canvas set. Her rails and spars and houses shone.

"What'll ye name her?" asked the smoker from his bunk.

"They don't build no such ships to-day," said one.

"No, nor never will again," said the smoker, and blew a cloud of white smoke all about her; so that she looked like a ship in a mist.

Manus began to trace the letters of her name on her bow in silver paint.

"*Petrel*, eh?" said one.

"You can't cage them birds," said the smoker.

There was a call from the deck without.

"Wind's comin'," said one.

Manus finished his painting.

From deck, mingling with the complaint of gear, came the voices of the other watch, who braced the yards in.

The smoker stuffed his pipe under his pillow.

"Better be gettin' a doss, boys," he said.

They rolled over, and turning their faces from the light pulled blankets about their chins.

Manus returned the model to her place upon the bench; then, removing neither sea boots nor oilskins, crawled into his bunk.

On deck the watch cried out upon the ropes, while the rumble of the sea increased.

At midnight the mate descended to the skipper's room.

As he turned the lamp high and looked at the figure on the bed the skipper rose with an effort upon his elbow; but fell exhausted back.

"The weather?" he whispered.

"Fair, sir—barometer falling," said the mate.

"If it rises the wind'll haul to nor'west. Don't get caught," whispered the skipper.

He lay very still, seeming to listen to the hurry of the sea beyond the port.

"Full sail?" he asked, presently.

"Everything set, sir," replied the mate, and continued,

"If this lasts she'll make Queenstown in nine or ten days. You'll be all right then, sir."

"Anything I can do for you, sir?" he added, after a silence.

The skipper closed his eyes.

"Good-night, sir," said the mate, and passed from the cabin, leaving the lamp high.

He went to the chart-room and stared at the barometer.

The second mate joined him there.

"It's steady," said the mate, "she'll hold a sou'west wind."

The wheel and lookout were relieved, the watches changed again.

"Keep handy the watch," called the mate, taking charge of the bridge.

The barque flew.

The watch went forward, beneath the forecastle head, to smoke their pipes while waiting on the weather. Manus, entering the forecastle alone, sat down beside his model. The fond work of many a dog watch through many a year, he studied her closely, from the point of her dolphin striker to her main sky-sail truck. Each brace block, each rigging seizing, each ring bolt upon her curving deck painted, and her brass and teak wood shining, she was a very perfect little ship. Bye and bye the old man arose, and, lifting her from her place upon the bench, bore her away through the door to the deck's darkness. The wind piped shrilly in the shrouds above him. No star shone as, the model in his arms, he walked aft, keeping well beneath the shelter of the weather rails.

He opened the alleyway door beneath the break of the poop, and feeling his way with slow and careful feet, made directly for the skipper's cabin.

As he opened the cabin door the lamp, bright on bare bulkheads and on the figure outstretched upon the narrow bed, twinkled on his little ship and lit up her dainty white canvas.

He placed her upon the deck and went to stand above the sleeping skipper. Outside the port the wind cried by, and the skipper, awakening as a comber crashed below the uplifted counter, half rose upon an elbow and looked at the old man.

"The sea, sir—the sea," said Manus.

Minutes passed in silence.

A light, flashing suddenly upon the sea without the port, illumined the old sailor's face. The skipper lay motionless, seeming to sleep, while from the poop above flare answered to flare.

Manus, peering through the port, saw the wan light at the steamer's mast head twinkle and fade astern as the barque sped swift-footed down the rising wind.

A brass bell, its tones faintly borne to the cabin, clanged the half hours away. Manus sat upon the deck, beside his model. Presently his head nodded, and he too slept.

The middle watch passed on.

When eight bells was made again the mates stood before the barometer.

"Wind's falling, sir?" said the second, and their eyes meeting the mate nodded.

"Rising a bit," he said, his gaze upon the instrument.

"Told the Old Man?" asked the second.

"I'll drive her for Queenstown," said the mate.

"Shall I keep full sail on her, sir?" asked the second. The mate nodded assent and went below.

It was that drear time before the awakening dawn when darkness is most desolate. Far in the South and West chill stars gleamed, feeble in a ragged sky.

The second mate walked to and fro. The young helmsman, stamping his feet, beat his hands upon the wheel spokes. The barque, lurching uneasily, slatted her canvas on spar and shroud. The wind now fallen to an air, the sea lapped undeterminedly.

In the cabin below, old Manus, his white beard upon his oilskinned breast, nodded in his sleep. The skipper, his eyes upon the tell-tale compass, watched while the barque, off her course, drifted to the ocean currents. Presently he whispered to the old man, who leaped up, and bent over him.

"Tell—them—to—shorten—sail!"

Manus hurried from the cabin.

As he stepped to the poop deck a blast beat upon him, and spray smote his face. The second mate, his voice drowned in sudden savagery from norward and westerly, shouted an order. The mate, awakened by the wind's roaring raced forward, the second at his side; each unaware of the other's proximity, and each bellowing to the sailors.

The sailors ran from the forecastles and bent into the wind, or stumbling before it, made toward halyards and clew-lines.

The barque quivered. Sprays swept her fore and aft. Men shouting impotently ran hither and yon. From the wind's heart above came a long grind of ripping backstays, a scream of twisted wire, and louder than either the harsh sound of splintering timbers.

The main topmast, thundering down, lay amidships

and athwart the bulwarks. The fore topmast fell, hampering about the bow.

While she lay, forced down by the wind and the weight of her wreckage, the main topmast slid out-board to lee, and taking the bulwarks with it, left a gap that yawned from fore royal backstays to main shrouds. The satisfied sea, hurling itself through that gap, ravaged an unprotected deck.

A second squall smote the barque. A comber, high lifted before it, topped the weather rail, and having swept the fore decks returned to the sea, bearing with it, choked and helpless, the broken bodies of the mate and five sailors.

Two sailors, remaining, crouched below the weather rail, and awaited doom.

The second mate called in vain. Only the tempest heard him, and none other gave reply. Presently, thinking he heard a smothered cry, he ran from his shelter beneath the midship house, and seeking the caller, unaware of the great gap that yawned in the lee railing, was instantly gone, for ever, to the sea.

At the first onslaught of the gale Manus had gone to the wheel, to find it abandoned and kicking to the blows of the waves against the rudder. The barque made no reply to his hands upon the spokes, and he at once descended again to the cabin.

The skipper, his shoulders propped against the bulk-head, lay upon the deck.

Manus, kneeling, gathered him in his oilskinned arms, and the yellow head resting against his shoulder, the bare feet dangling helplessly, bore him to the chart-room and laid him gently down upon the settee.

Beyond the chart-room door the sea roared defiance to a momentarily increasing tempest.

The skipper, his eyes on the old sailor's face, tried in vain to speak, and Manus, watching his colorless lips, nodded a sudden assent and was immediately gone to the deck.

He stood awhile at the head of the poop ladder, and harkened to the storm; then passed down to the quarter-deck. In the impenetrable darkness cataracts swirled waist high about him. Clinging to bolts and back-stays, and biding his chances, he advanced in short rushes. As the barque, rising to a ridge, in part freed her decks of their torment he ran for the after end of the midship house and ere the angry sea returned to seek him was safe within the door; the door slammed to behind him.

In the darkness of the locker room he drew long breaths, and fumbling within his oilskins, sought and found dry matches. In another moment a lantern, swung to a beam above, shone on his dripping oilskins. Then, as though seeking some definite thing he flung ship's gear from hastily opened lockers, till chafing mats and sennet, spunyarn and hausline, lay all about his feet. He threaded a sail needle and thrust it into his sou'wester brim; then seized a long canvas sack, and taking the lantern down, knelt to read the faded letters upon three iron tanks that stood against the bulkhead.

"Raw oil," he read, and passed to the next. When he came to the third tank he opened the faucet full, thrusting the sack beneath it.

When the sack was full he arose and with quick unhurried fingers sewed up its mouth. Then, the needle in his sou'wester brim and the oil sack thrown over his shoulder, stepped to the door and listened to the uproar on the deck.

In a moment he stepped once more into the waist deep sea. One hand grasping the lanyard of the oil sack, the other firm about the house rail, he battled his slow way forward and keeping instinctively amidships, came presently to the forward end of the house. There for a space he bided his time and at length, thinking he sensed the approach of a lull, leapt forward. At the very instant that he left the handrail, a comber toppling the rail engulfed him, and he slipt and fell face downward on the deck. Deep in the sea he was swept fast to leeward. The lanyard of the oil sack, entangled about a fife rail stanchion, held him for one brief moment, and checked in the smothering waters he felt at that moment an iron ring-bolt bruise his knee. Instantly his clawing fingers closed on the iron and held. The wrench of his hand hold all but tore his arm from its socket, as with the oil sack now dragging upon his other shoulder, he fought to lift his head above the waters. When for a moment they receded his breath came—a gasping great sob that was choked to a desperate gurgle as the sea once more rolled over him. Water filled his sea boots, which, thus filled, wrenched at his legs. His hold was fast growing feeble. Though weakened by the added weight upon his feet he strove to kick and so striving was helped by that very weight that would have defeated him. His boots, torn from his feet, were instantly swept through the gap that yawned not six feet from him. He struggled to his feet and dragging the sack by its lanyard, half ran, half staggered to the forecastle head and ascended the ladder. He knelt upon the forecastle head, crouching backwards upon his heels with the sack held firmly between his knees, and thus, with the roping needle from his sou’wester

rim, jabbed hole after hole in the stiff canvas. When, having lashed the lanyard fast to a stanchion, he had hurled the leaking sack of seal oil into the weltering sea, he rested awhile ere he again descended to the main deck. Freed of his burden he returned in safety to the oil locker, the wreck already riding more easily upon an oil smoothed sea. Within the locker he dropped to his knees and thus sought and found the wooden scupper plugs and knocked them free. The water from without gurgled through the open holes. He opened the outer door, and lashed it wide—that the sea might enter the locker room. Then, having turned the faucet of each oil tank full on, he returned to the open deck, an axe in his hand.

Dawn was breaking. The barque rode easily upon the oil streaked sea, while, beyond the oily track down which she drifted, rain, falling in torrents, drove the outer sea crests down. Her broken topmasts stood ragged against the dark low-hanging sky. Fragments of the boats, wind-beaten, clattered against the skids and davits. A tangle of wire and canvas, spar and cordage, hung about her to leeward. Of all her sails only the fore-sail and fore lower topsail, which alternately filled and flattened as she veered unguided to the swing of the combers, remained intact.

Manus went to the chart-house and looked in upon the skipper. The skipper lay with his eyes closed, and axe in hand the old man returned to the deck once more and, his footing precarious upon an oily though less sea-swept deck, hastened to the cutting of her wreckage.

As screw box by screw box, backstay by backstay, rope by rope, he hewed away the hapless tangle that but a few short hours before had been a gracious sym-

metry, his figure loomed primordial in the driving rain.

When at length the barque lay freed of the wreck of her tophammer, gray day was wide above the water wastes. The rain had thinned, the wind fallen somewhat away. Masses of low cloud and slanting walls of rain, passing ahead and astern, spoke of the dying angers of the night.

Manus, his labors accomplished, returned to the chart-room and pausing but a moment to gaze at the face of the sleeping skipper, passed down the companion ladder to the saloon.

The cabin lamp had burned out, and the little room lay chill in the drear light of dawn. Water, upflung through the port, slapped forth and back upon the deck. Manus closed the port; then bending above his model lifted her and bore her up the companion way to the chart-room. He laid her down upon the chart-room deck, and removing his sou'wester, sat down on the settee at the skipper's feet. A trickle of blood, from the wire cut of a torn backstay, ran from his forehead to his beard. Wearily, his eyes upon the beauty of the model's sails, he leaned against the bulkhead, and in a little while, worn by the long labors of the night, nodded and slept.

From the wet deck of the tramp, men stared at the dismasted barque upon the sea ahead.

"Abandoned, sir," said the skipper.

The mate laid his binoculars down.

"I see a man in her chart-house, sir," he said.

Watching the wreck, they watched also the squalls that threatened along the heaved rim of the windward sea.

An old man stood in the steamer's outswung boat, from which oil seeped to the tossing sea below.

"I daren't spare you another man, sir," said the skipper to his mate.

The mate made no reply. His eyes were shining, and on his lips there seemed to play the faint suggestion of a breaking smile.

From steamer to wreck a track of oil-smoothed waters lay over the surges, and as the boat dropped to the sea, the two men cast off the tackle blocks and grasped the oars. Then, while the steamer headed away to pass to leeward of the wreck and await their return, the rowers swung forth and back with steady strong motion. The low cries of petrels were heard, faint on the wind's moan, as sprays uptossed by the advancing squall smote on the oarsmen. The rain fell faster and hissed on the sea; a sibillant sound that whispered of terrors behind it.

The forward rower, turning his head, saw that the steamer was lost to sight in the weather to leeward.

"Lay back, Jake!" he shouted.

Upstanding sinews, corded muscles, quivered in the arms and shoulders of the two rowers.

The derelict lay ahead, a mournful shape, dim in the sea's upheavals.

"Lay back, Jake!" shouted the mate again, rain and wind and salt spray in his face.

A moment more and the boat, swinging to, rounded under the wreck's lee counter tossing like a leaf upon a high November tide.

The mate, a hand to his lips, cried a long hail to the derelict.

From over the taffrail above him a white head looked down.

"Jump!" shouted the oarsmen, together.

The barque, lurching, rolled her taffrail low, till all her canted deck was visible from the boat thwarts.

From the open chart room door there gazed a thin white face.

Old Manus, his white hair wind tossed, pointed,

"Petrel, sir," he cried, above the sound of the advancing weather.

E'er the word had left his lips the mate leapt to the wreck's dipped bumpkin, and grasping it, swung himself over the taffrail.

The squall broke. Torrential rain fell. The wind cried triumphantly. The barque, staggering to lee crushed the boat beneath her, and while she lay in the heart of terror, one old man hauled another from out the dark devouring sea.

The mate of the steamer knelt in the chart-room, holding his old companion's hand fast in his own, while from within the door the two old sailors stared into the dying tempest's fury.

The sea became lighter. The storm clouds parted.

The last clear wind from that storm's heavy heart swept above an emerald crested sea. The wreck, upswung by a roller, lay with the gale astern. Her two white sails wind-bellied, she gathered headway, while the sea cried challenge to her undefeated feet.

From the chart-room doorway a sailor pointed to the breaking glooms ahead.

Broadside in the path of the derelict wallowed the steamer, smoke and a whirl of cinders belching from her rusty funnel.

The derelict sped on, the sky brightening above her as she broke white waters from her shapely bow.

A shudder ran her length. She shook. She trem-

bled, swept by the great green seas that rolled victoriously.

She lay alone upon her sea, her last white wings a crumpled heap upon her fore-castle head; a smother of oil, and of whirled smoke wisps round her collision shattered bow.

The sun gleamed down, the sky's warm brightness reflected on the white ridged sea.

A man who seemed to smile stepped from her chart-room bearing in strong arms a fragile figure.

The wind sang, murmurous, above serene waters.

An old man came from the chart-room, a little ship held tight in his tired arms. He bore her aft, to the wheel grating, and laid her there; the breeze in her gracious wings, her bows toward headlands very far away.

Kneeling at the break of the derelicts poop the mate smoothed back his old companion's hair.

Old Manus knelt beside them, his brown face near the white.

Suddenly his arm, outstretched, encircled an arc of the watery universe.

"The sea,——" he whispered.

A light shone in the face beside him.

"Our's——" came the smilingly whispered reply.

The foundering barque lurched, dipping low to twin summits of a crested roller.

Petrels fly over the sea, hovering low to the hollows, and high to the wild blue ridges——spirits at home, and happy in their chosen element.

THE STAIN

“**B**LOOD,” said the skipper,
“Blood, make it flow,
Take a teak belaying pin
And make the packet go.”

The mate was a bucko,
Hard case was he,
Driving thirty sailors
Taking her to sea.

“Blood,” said the skipper,
“Blood’s coloured red,—
Take a teak belaying pin
And beat ’em on the head.”

The second was a bucko
To rage and to swear,
Beating thirty sailors
Through the straits of Le Maire.

“Blood,” screamed the molly-hawk,
Breasting the gale,
“Blood,” the great white albatross,
“There’s blood upon her sail.”

“Blood,” said the sailors,
“A hard case ship!
An’ when we gets to ’Frisco
We’ll all give her the slip.”

So they took us seaward,
So brought us in,
Driving lovely clippers
By the blood upon the pin.

"Blood," said the Lord God,
"Blood on my sea!
The men who fouled my waters
Shall some day answer Me."

OLD RAMBLE-AWAY

TWENTY miles without the Golden Gate, off the Farallone islands, lay the black Tyne ship, becalmed, the fog thick as porridge, cold as fog off the Farallones may be. Wet dripped from every sail to the deck of the black Tyne ship.

It was night; the fog-hid sky held neither star nor yellow moon. Darkness hid the sea fog; the red and green sidelights of the old Tynesider scarce twinkling five feet to either side of her sharp bows.

In her forecastle sat all hands, and Solomon the sea cook who was come to play a game of checkers with Nifty Schmidt the sail-maker.

His pipe between his lips, his watery eyes fixed upon the flame of his small lamp, Chips, the carpenter, sat on the long bench in his shop.

On the fore deck Tom Swift and Bloody Quayle argued together; each endeavouring to convince his shipmate that his own favorite instrument played the sweetest music.

"Flutes is older'n fiddles," said Bloody, piping a plaintive melody on the old silver flute which by rights was not his at all, but belonged to Lon Yunt, the square-head.

"Fiddles make your feet fly faster," retorted Tom Swift.

On the forecastle head, to and fro, his hands in his pockets and his head hunched low in his shoulders, walked young Twinkle-Bright, a "hey-jig-em-along-

son" step in his small feet. His cap was wet. His coat was wet. He was wet all over but he did not care.

In the chart-room sat the little Welsh skipper, solemn as a barn owl on a moony night ashore. In the chart-house doorway stood the mate, staring into the foggy night.

"Thick enough to cut in hunks and throw at the boarding masters when they come aboard," said he.

"Thick enough to make soup for all hands and save the owners a day's soup money," said the little Welsh skipper.

"Where d'ye reckon that big Yankee fly-away is by now, mister?" he added.

"No tellin', sir," said the mate.

In silence each of them wondered where the Maine ship *Shenandoah*, racing them to 'Frisco, might then be.

"W-h-h-h-o-o-o-osh," came a long soppety sort of a sound from right below the counter of the black Tyne ship.

The little Welsh skipper looked at his mate. The mate looked at his skipper.

"There she—" said the mate.

"There she—" said the skipper.

"*Blows!*" said the two of them together.

The night fell silent as the sky when all the stars have ceased to twinkle just before the dawn comes up out of the talkative east.

"Cl-u-u-u-n-k," came a queer sort of sound from under the stern.

Together the mate and the little Welsh skipper left the chart-room and going it aft stood one on either side of the man at the wheel.

There was no sound save the drip-drip of fog from lead vang, signal halyards, gaff and spanker boom.

"C-l-u-u-u-nk," came the gurgling, rubbing, sound from directly below the three of them.

"How's she steerin', my lad?" asked the little Welsh skipper, of the man at the wheel.

The binnacle light illumined their faces, all in a row, with their heads side by side; the sea fog on the beards of each of them.

"Cl-u-u-u-nk-a-a-ah."

"How's she steerin', my lad?" repeated the skipper.

"She ain't steerin', sir," said the helmsman.

"Cl-u-u-u-u-nk-a-a-ah," came from directly below them, while the wheel spun swiftly round and round in his mittened hands, the helmsman quite unable to stop it doing so.

"What makes the wheel spin if she ain't steerin', my lad?" asked the skipper.

"Helm's a-kickin', sir," said the helmsman, "h'i can't 'elp h'it."

"W-h-h-o-o-osh," came a long sloppety sort of sound from right below and from right behind them, so that they all jumped in surprise.

"There she—" said the little skipper.

"There she—" said the mate.

"There she—" said the helmsman.

"*Blows!*" cried the three of them together, each staring to the dark astern. Round spun the wheel spokes, round and round. Try as he might the helmsman could not stop them spinning.

"He is rubbing his—" said the skipper.

"He is rubbing his—" said the mate.

"He is rubbing his—" said the helmsman.

"Nose on the rudder," said the three of them to-

gether, as men who have served aboard a Dundee whaler will.

"But he ain't no Greenland Right whale," said the little Welsh skipper.

"And he ain't no white Beluga," said the mate.

"And he must be a thundering big Sperm," said the little skipper, "if he can spin the wheel of a big three skysail-yarder *that way*."

Round and round spun the wheel spokes, and never a whit, despite the whole of his strength, could the helmsman stop their spinning.

"Mister," said the skipper, "get a tackle and lash the helm—he will tear out the rudder post a-rubbing of it with that old nose of his. I am going below," he added, "and call me at once when the fog lifts."

"Very good, sir," said the mate, and blew his whistle.

"Get a tackle aft here, and get the helm lashed," said he.

In a few minutes the helm was lashed and the wheel had ceased to kick.

In the forecandle sat the cook and sail-maker playing a game of checkers, while, seated on a bench, Tom and Bloody made sweet music with their favourite instruments.

All about them sat the sailors, thinking of ham and eggs at Dutch Jake's place on Sacramento street.

"Kin you cook ham an' eggs?" asked Dicky Blunt, the ordinary seaman of Solomon the sea cook, who, looking up, made a wrong move and lost his first king.

No sea cook is supposed to know how to cook shore-going dishes.

"W-h-h—o-o-o-sh," came a sloppety sort of sound from right forward.

"*There she blows!*" shouted all the sailors together, and ran to the deck to stare into the darkness and the sea fog.

"Kin you cook a soft boiled egg for folks wot lives ashore?" asked Dicky Blunt, and, looking round, Solomon lost a second king.

"Can't play checkers wi' that lad askin' foolish questions," said Solomon the sea cook.

Together, Solomon and Nifty, with Dicky Blunt behind them, stepped to the deck to seek the spouting whale.

Not a sign could they see.

At that moment there appeared from below, standing bolt upright, on the step of the forecastle door, the Boatswain of the rats. His eyes were starry beads. His nose uptilted. His front paws rested on his slender jet black hips. His tail was turned up, and rested over his weather shoulder.

He made a silent and suggestive motion to the two old pals, with his eyes and elbows. Nodding to him they arose and winking meaningly to each other left the forecastle behind him.

No sooner were they gone than the sailors came crowding back from the darkness by the railing for there was not a thing to be seen save the darkness, which was thick and impenetrable as plum duff aboard a London square-rigged ship.

They all sat at the forecastle table.

Solomon and Nifty reentered together, Dicky Blunt behind them.

"I'll bet ye scoff for all hands at Dutch Jake's place that I kin beat ye at checkers," said Nifty to the cook.

"An' I'll bet ye ye can't," said Solomon, as down they both sat.

"Don't no one say nuthin' about no soft boiled eggs, nor none o' they shore goin' dishes," said Solomon in a solemn tone.

"Your move, Sol," said Dicky Blunt, hitching his pants up.

Upon the forecastle head stood young Twinkle-Bright with Tom Swift and Bloody Quayle on either side of him. On his starboard shoulder sat the jet black Boatswain of the rats, his tail over his weather shoulder, his paws on his hips, and both eyes shining.

"W-h-h—o-o-o-sh," came a sloppety sound from down in the sea beneath the dolphin-striker.

"There she—" said Tom Swift.

"There she—" said Bloody Quayle.

"Blows," said the two of them together.

Every educated person knows that there lives no creature, either ashore or afloat, that is so fond of music as is the lonely whale.

From close beneath them, beside the port bow, came a long rubbing sort of sound. Tom looked at Bloody. Bloody looked at Tom. As every one is well aware, every one who is really fond of sweet music has good eyes in the dark. They nodded to each other. Side by side, young Twinkle-Bright between them with the bosun of the rats upon his shoulder, they moved to the port railing.

The red port sidelight glimmered on the waters of the fog-hid night-forgotten sea.

Reaching toward Tom Swift the bosun of the rats gently pinched his ear tip, and, reaching backward again, gently pinched the tip of Bloody Quayle's ear too. While the two old pals caressed their instruments young Twinkle-Bright commenced to softly whistle the

tune of "Fifty little fishes looking for the gateway to little fish heaven."

"W-h-h-o-o-o-sh," came a sound from directly beneath them.

Slowly from the night-hid sea arose the back of the greatest of all the great, and now forever lonely, old sperm whales—for the whaling ships have spoiled the sea, and life for whales is no longer what life used to be.

From the deeps of ocean he came, stately and sedate, till, right below the red port sidelight, lay a rolling mountain of glistening black, the water dripping off it, and little wavelets rippling all around.

"Easy, lads, easy," whispered the bosun of the rats, as softly rose the favorite melody of the old sperm whales who, inhabiting the sea, feed on the little fishes.

Everything was still. The sea around the whale ceased to ripple. Slowly he rose his great age-furrowed face above the water.

"That's what made—" said Tom Swift.

"That's what made—" said Bloody Quayle.

"Made him make the rubbedy noise," said the two of them together.

The bosun of the rats had leapt upon the head of young Twinkle-Bright, and now, his tail waving excitedly his paws on his hips, he leaned far forward.

From the corner of his eye Twinkle-Bright looked up, and meeting the eye of the bosun, winked a happy wink.

"A tow to 'Frisco," cried the bosun of the rats.

"One good turn deserves another," murmured young Bright.

"Ain't music sweet?" said Tom and Bloody, both

together, both gazing at the old and lonely whale.

The head of the majestic devourer of little fishes rose from the sea, higher and higher; the red port sidelight of the black Tyne ship gleaming on his hoary brow, glinting in the deep furrows of his enormous head.

There was no sound, no sigh of wind or sob of water, no lift of sail, or grunt of brace block; nothing save the tender strains of the song of "Fifty little fishes looking for the gateway to little fish heaven."

Behind the back of Twink, Tom and Bloody nodded to each other.

Forward, and yet farther forward, bent young Twinkle-Bright, while on his head, farther and yet farther forward, bent the bosun of the rats.

"Rubbedy, rubbedy—poor old rubbedy," said Twink, in a soft and loving voice.

From the right eye of the whale there slowly trickled a sad salt tear—a tear large enough to have drowned two Dicky Blunts.

"Rubbedy, rubbedy, poor old rubbedy!" said Twink again, and leaned so far over that it seemed as though he must fall into the sea.

"Ha—" said Dicky Blunt in the forecastle, where, bending closer and closer about old Nifty Schmidt and Solomon the sea cook sat the whole ship's company—and just stopped himself in time from saying "ham and eggs," for Sol was moving a king, and ham and eggs would have lost him the game.

No one spoke. Nifty looked at Sol, and Sol looked at Nifty. Each stared at the checker board, Dicky Blunt beside them to see fair play.

At the helm the helmsman, since the wheel was

lashed and the ship not steering, had fallen sound asleep—after the fashion from time immemorial aboard the limejuice ships.

In the chart-room sat the mate, before a chart of the town of San Francisco.

“Two blocks up Vallejo Street—round a corner, or one block up Battery Street and round two corners,” said he, pricking out with a pair of compasses the shortest way from the sea wall wharf to Dutch Jake’s place on Sacramento street.

“I will order two soft boiled eggs and a glass of milk,” said the mate, who was by nature teetotal—or what, in the States, is now known as “prohibition.”

“Two soft boiled eggs and a glass of milk,” he murmured again, and, his head drooping on the table, fell fast asleep.

“Bose,” said Twinkle-Bright upon the forecastle head, “we will need a dab of Stockholm tar.”

As everybody knows, there is nothing so healing as Stockholm tar. Plugged into a hollow tooth Stockholm tar will cure the tooth ache. Smearcd upon a cut Stockholm tar will heal that cut right up. Stockholm tar is better than all the doctors who have ever cut off a lame man’s one good leg, and have left him nothing to hobble on.

“Bose,” said young Twink again, whispering to the bosun of the rats, “what about Chips?”

The words were barely out of his mouth ere the bosun of the rats, springing from the top of his head, had leaped to the deck and hopped down the accommodation ladder. He ran helter skelter aft, to the midship house, and stopped at the door of the carpenter’s shop.

The carpenter, his pipe between his lips, sat with his eyes upon the lamp flame.

"One pint of Stockholm, and see you get a move on," said the bosun of the rats, in a commanding tone of voice.

"And you'd better give me a handful of oakum and a caulking mallet into the bargain," he added.

Chips, without removing his pipe, as though unaware of the presence of the bosun, murmured to himself.

"Dutch Jake's—ham an' eggs—ham an' eggs."

As though unconsciously, he gave the bosun of the rats a pint of tar, in an old marmalade can, and a handful of oakum and a caulking mallet.

Winding the oakum about his waist, the bosun of the rats balanced the pint of tar upon his head, and grasping the caulking mallet in both paws, ran swiftly forward, saying, as he left the door of the carpenter's shop,

"Wait here till I get back, and don't you move."

"Ham and eggs," murmured Chips, blowing tobacco smoke down both his nostrils.

The bosun laid the tar, the oakum, and the caulking mallet at the feet of Twinkle-Bright.

"That's—" said Tom Swift, staring at the whale.

"That's—" said Bloody Quayle, staring at the whale.

"Yankee tin," said the two of them together.

Slowly a second tear, ponderous, and of ineffable sadness, rolling from the whale's right eye, splashed into the sea.

"Boys," said Twink, "the last line of the first verse of the song of fifty little fishes—play it very gently. We cannot reach from here."

As the two old pals played that tender music over again, the right eye of the whale, the red sidelight shining on it, seemed to grow less thoughtful, and less intensely sad. Seeming to make no effort, he swam nearer and nearer to the ship. Slowly lifting his hoary head from the water he faced the four friends upon the forecastle head, his nose upon the level of the deck on which they stood.

"Gently, very gently," murmured Twinkle-Bright to the musicians, while the tail of the bosun of the rats waved excitedly to and fro.

The whale, his chin resting against the side of the ship, the red light on his thoughtful face, as though fascinated with the delightful melody, seemed to close his eyes.

Twinkle-Bright, the tar pot slung to his wrist, the oakum in one hand, the caulking mallet in the other, crept close to the old whale's chin.

Tom laid down his fiddle. Bloody laid down his flute. The whale, as though entranced, was motionless.

"Now," whispered the bosun of the rats.

Together, their hands outstretched toward him, the two old pals leaned over. Together they grasped the haft of the harpoon that stuck, upright, in the old whale's nose.

Slowly there oozed from his closed eyes two salt tears.

"Easy, boys, easy,—all together—*now!*" said the bosun of the rats, and with one long heave they withdrew the cruel spear.

"Quick," cried the bosun of the rats to Twink, who, leaning right over the old whale's nose, immediately thrust the wad of oakum tightly into the hole. Hold-

ing the caulking mallet in both hands he swiftly tapped, three times, upon the oakum.

"That closes the hole," he cried, excitedly.

Before the words were out of his mouth, the bosun, seizing the tar pot, sprang lightly onto the whale's nose. In another instant he had spilled the Stockholm tar all over the oakum and was back upon the fore-castle head.

There was no sound. There was neither sob nor ripple. The whale was gone.

"Quick—" cried Twink, "the tune of 'All the little herrings and a moon-light night'!"

Twink stepped across the fore-castle head. Through a rift in the fog, lighting the chill sea darkness, there fell a faint glimmer of moonshine.

"Play, boys, play," cried Twinkle-Bright and the bosun together.

Slowly rose the tune of "All the little herrings and a moon-light night." Up from the sea to starboard, right beneath the green sidelight, arose the mighty head of the old sperm whale.

The moon shone on his nose, as he turned to the little company of seafaring folk upon the fore-castle head. There was scarce a sign of a wound left. The Stockholm tar was beginning to work.

Three times, up and down, and down and up, and up and down again, he bowed; graceful as none but a sperm whale may be.

"One good turn deserves another," cried the bosun of the rats.

"One good turn deserves another," cried young Twinkle-Bright.

Majestically the whale bowed again, three times as before.

"Boys," said Twink to the musicians, "leave the music be. Fetch the end of the flying jib down-haul."

"Ham and eggs," muttered Chips, sitting beside the bench in his shop, his pipe gone out, and his head nodding on his outstretched arms.

"Ha,——" murmured Dicky Blunt in the forecastle, and restrained himself in time, for Solomon the sea cook and Nifty Schmidt the sail-maker had each of them just three kings left. It was a very close game.

"A block up this street and a block down that—ham and eggs at Jake's," said the mate in the chart room to himself, and, his head drooping, fell asleep once more.

The helmsman never stirred.

The little Welsh skipper who, in his cabin, dreamed that the men of Harlech were seated in a row all eating pea soup at the expense of the owners of the black Tyne ship, showed pain in every feature.

Twinkle-Bright, taking the end of the flying jib down-haul from Tom and Bloody, bowed gracefully to the whale.

"We want to go to 'Frisco, and there isn't any wind," said he.

"We want to go to 'Frisco," said the bosun of the rats.

Twink winked to the two musicians. Grasping their instruments they stepped quickly to the boom, and there, one behind the other, took their seats, their legs astride the boom.

"All right," said Tom.

"All right," said Bloody.

"Let 'im 'ave it," said the two of them together.

The bosun of the rats, Twinkle-Bright just behind him, stood at the very end of the long flying boom. The moon, glimmering through the 'Frisco fog, broke a silver pathway along the sea before the black Tyne-sider. Ahead of her, the end of the flying jib down-haul between his mighty lips, his huge bulk gently heaving, his prodigious flukes swaying rhythmically up and down, slowly through the molten sea toward the Golden Gate swam the old and lonely whale.

"Play, boys, play, and I will dance to it," cried Twink, on the very end of the flying boom.

The music floated over the sea; above the back of the wistful whale, who from watchful eyes stared to the thinned fogs to either side. As everybody knows very well a whale cannot see right ahead.

The fog banks parted. The stars came out, to glitter all around the yellow moon, who, lying gracefully upon her back, with one eye cocked downward, stared at the black Tyne ship. The water gurgled and bubbled as the Tynesider stole through the sea, her white and idle topsails, topgallantsails, and royals, bright as shining hill tops in the winter time ashore.

Faster and faster the Tyne ship stole through the sleepy sea, while ever faster the two musicians played, the feet of little Twinkle-Bright upon the boom end keeping time to their tune.

"Ha-a-aam," said Dicky Blunt in the forecastle, as Nifty Schmidt's last king, hopping over Solomon the sea cook's last king, won the game. Before he could finish what he was going to say Dicky's head drooped upon his chest and, an arm about the neck of either player, he had fallen fast asleep. Every sailor slumbered. All was still.

From the thin mists ahead there rose the open portals of the Golden Gate, majestic, mute, on the edge of the ocean.

"Tootle, tootle, tootle, toot," went the fiddle and the flute.

The eyes of the whale were gleaming with pleasure.

"One good turn deserves another, old Ramble-Away," cried Twink who danced above him.

"We've got to go to 'Frisco and there isn't any wind," cried the bosun of the rats. He waved his tail and he stamped his feet; his hands on his hips, his eyes on the moon—who winked deliberately at him.

*"Ramble Away, Ramble Away,
Here comes the young kid
They call Ramble Away,"*

sang Twink and the bosun together, with their four feet going jiggedy.

"Flip-flop—three more miles and back to the open water," said the old sperm whale, staring watchfully at Bonita light and at the light on Mile rock.

"And when you get there you watch out," said Bloody, taking the flute from his lips for a moment.

"And when you get there you watch out," said Twink and the bosun together.

"For the old Yankee fly-away," cried the four friends all together.

"Flip-flop,—you're abeam of 'Frisco ferries," said the lonesome whale, and letting go the flying jib down-haul he turned around.

Rising a little from the water he bowed gracefully to the four friends.

"One good turn deserves another," said he.

The music was still, the feet of the dancers silent. There was no sound.

Rising on the tips of his flukes he bowed to them all, and once more, winking peacefully, sank from sight in the sea.

"Let's go below," said Tom.

"Let's go below," said Bloody.

Together they went below.

Twinkle-Bright, the bosun of the rats on his shoulder, disappeared down the sail locker hatch.

"C-l-u-u-u-unka," came a sound from under the stern of the black Tyne ship, awakening the helmsman with a start, awakening the mate in the chart room, and the skipper below in his cabin.

"All hands on deck," cried the mate, as, rubbing his eyes, he stepped to the poop and stared perplexedly at the lights of San Francisco on the quiet water.

They furled all sail, and dropped her big bow anchors.

Upon the forecastle head the mate picked up a bent harpoon, and turned it over and over in his fingers. On the haft was cut one word—the name of the ship it came from, "*Shenandoah*."

"Ah," said the mate, shaking his head, and walked aft to shew it to the skipper.

"Ah," said the skipper, the solution of the puzzle beyond him.

Through the open Golden Gate, the sun of morning bright and gay upon her, a white bone at her curving bow, her numbers all a-flutter on the breeze, came the four mast *Shenandoah*.

The sailors of the Tyne ship swarmed upon their forecastle head to watch her come to moorings. The

sailors of the *Shenandoah* gathered on the forward deck, to stare in plain astonishment at the ship from the Tyne.

"Three, bullies, three,—three all together, now," cried the boatswain of the black Tyne ship.

The sailors of the Tyne ship gave her three, ringing them over the fog-lifted wind-drifted waters of San Francisco bay at the bright break of the morning.

"Three, bullies, three,—three all together, now," roared the boatswain of the towering *Shenandoah*.

The sailors of the *Shenandoah* gave the Tyne ship three, ringing them over the fog-lifted wind-drifted waters of San Francisco bay at the bright break of the morning.

On the poop of the black Tyne ship stood the little Welsh skipper, his mate beside him.

"He brought us luck," said the little Welsh skipper.

"That's what he did, sir—I've seed it afore," said the mate.

SHIP'S COMPANY

THE Master—

His beard is gray; his thin eyes windy green;
His brown face hard, and his tall figure lean;
His lips are thin, his ears close to his head;
His step well nigh as silent as the dead;
His voice a rasp, a harsh, a chilling sound,
As though the music in his soul were drowned.

“Keep sail on her! Lash down, and batten all!
Steady the helm, there! Watch her! Here’s a
squall!

Keep all hands handy; she has got to go!”
The Old Man stares to windward, through the
snow.

The Mate—

He is a bucko, grown to six foot six;
Reared on hard packets, with sky-pointing sticks;
His voice a bison bellow when the Master
Bids him crowd on the sail, and drive her faster.
A man well known to women of the coast,
Who make his love their loveless lives’ best boast.

“Rouse out, you lubbers! jump along here, men!
Lively now, does it! Topsail sheets again!”
Upright he towers above the weather rail,
Nor heeds the spray, unharried by the gale.

Second Mate—

He is tow-headed, bulge-eyed; heavy-lipped,
Big-handed, bullock-necked, but springy-hipped.

Singing a chantey is his great delight,
His voice as a high wind on some high night.
Fear his sole stranger; manhood his one crown—
A simple lad, who'll sing when he must drown.

"Gowd dommit! Git a move on ye now, run!
I'll make fit sailors of ye ere I'm done!"
Laughing, he leads them where the peril lies;
Oaths on his tongue, and mirth in his wide
eyes.

Third Mate—

A sea apprentice, eager eyed, with curls,
That are the cherishment of all the girls;
A voice to sing, strong hands that seem to grip,
As though he positively loved the ship.
He says he hates her! Says he hates the sea!
Thrall'd by her beauties he will ever be.

"Hurrah! hurrah! she'll soon be in, old son!
A few more weeks, and then my time is done!
Then I shall leave her. Ah—won't that be swell?
No more for me! I've had my dose. It's hell!"

Carpenter—

A sallow Swede; a freckle-faced old Chips,
With yellow whiskers hiding his quiet lips;
A man whose wife is dead. He woos the sea,
Waiting, most patient, on bar mystery;
Wand'ring from port to port, and back again;
His whiskers streaked with dark tobacco stain.

"Dere coom de time ven vee iss in fine vedder,
I plays mine fiddle, so's you dance togedder."
"Chip," say the sailors, "that old devil's smart!
He plays the fiddle! Why, he's got a heart!"

Sail-maker—

Beside the hatch he sits, and ever stitches,
Calling the mates and men all sons of bitches;
Watchful lest mates don't set her canvas tight;
Frowning when leeches fail to stretch aright.
Twine round his neck, a needle in his lips,
An old Dutch dressmaker for dainty ships.

"I vish dot mates voss know dot schob dey do!
Gott dom! I vish I sail mitt better crew!"
The fit of ev'ry sail is his despair;
Loving the ship, he fain would treat her fair.

Cook—

Pleased with his brew, as though he brewed delight
In some crazed port, on some rose tinted night,
The skinny Cockney stirs pea soup, and grins,
Thinking of times to come, and cherished sins;
Hearing mazed dance halls, with the fiddles twink-
ing,

He watches boiling pork; his red eyes blinking.

"Pile on th' canvas, boys, an' let 'er drive!
I'm spilin' fer a dance in Kelly's dive.
It's burned, you say? I 'ope's to 'ell you chokes!
You lot o' bleedin' good fer nuthin' blokes!"

Sea Apprentice—

His mother kissed him down beside the dock,
Waving her kerchief, wet, from Toxteth lock;
A youngster, fresh from home, pink in his cheek.
His voice so soft they grin to hear him speak.
A lad so innocent, so sweetly simple,
He's unaware that women love a dimple.

"Look at the cute-eyed young apprentice kid!

Hey, sunshine! stay awhile, and hang your lid.
I'll be your honey, see! I love your sort—
If you've no money, that's all right! I'm
caught."

The Sailors—

There are a score of them, young men and old,
Bearded and shaven, cowards and overbold;
Sea lifted flotsam, drifting to and fro,
Nor ever questioning what way they go;
Prey for the waiting crimps, and hoarding masters,
Biding their drowning time in sea disasters.

"Strike up de musik. Vot we got to care?

Hey, concertina! Alec, step it fair!

Round now, you goes! Shake up, shake up de
toon!

Chris'—ain't her canvas lovely in th' moon?"

ENVOI

Strike up the music! What have we to care?

Hey, concertina! Shipmate, step it fair!

Round now, we go! Shake up, shake up the tune—

Christ—that white beauty shining in the moon!

THE FENCELESS MEADOWS

I

THE *Fancy Nan* was at anchor, off the Howard Street wharf, San Francisco, ready for sea. Upon the wharf were gathered her crew, waiting for the boat to take them aboard. The boat had gone off to the ship, taking the owner and his daughter, and was now on her way back.

At the cabin table sat the owner and the skipper. Mr. Tattersall, the skipper, a thin old fish—a scarred whale bearing the marks of many years' seafaring; appearing about to speak, but silent; his face wrinkled by the winds and weather stress of all the oceans; graying about the temples, with a small iron-gray beard and stiff mustache; his cold and penetrating eyes watching the owner with a restless expression; his large ears, pressed close against his head, as if by the everlasting winds of the sea, seeming to listen carefully both to what his owner was saying and to the sounds that came from the deck without; his hands, thin-fingered and sharp-knuckled, folded upon the table before him.

Dowser, his owner, leaned across the table toward him. Dowser was bald; a stout man with folds of florid skin about his clean-shaven face; large eyes and prominently blue, with, in them, a strangely mournful expression. Unlike this six-foot skipper, a short man—his sailors calling him “cut off and hammered

down"—short-armed, with fat fingers; wearing across his vest a heavy gold watch-chain, ornamented with a row of shark's teeth set in gold fittings; a man of advanced years, looking backward rather than forward, along life; wearing, as he faced his skipper, an expression that seemed apologetic.

"Shoofly," he said, "it's up to you."

"Women's out of place on a ship," replied the other. "You know it, Dowser, or you ought to know it." He stopped suddenly, adding in a low voice—

"I don't forget the old *Nanette*, sir."

Dowser, bowing his head, sat silent; and directly, half-rising, held out a hand.

"Shoofly," he said, "you don't think I forget? But this is different."

The skipper took the proffered hand and for a moment they stood with hands clasped above the table.

"Mr. Dowser, I don't forget that you are my owner—any more than I forgot that you were my skipper in the old *Nanette*, sir. Orders are orders."

"I wish you'd cut out the 'sir,' Shoofly. I wish you'd be more human."

Pausing a moment he added—

"I don't know how you and Nance will hit it off if you can't be more human."

Turning, he led the way up through the chart-house to the poop. Against the taff-rail, beside the signal-halyards, leaned a girl, seeming, despite the skipper's words, by no means out of place there; seeming, indeed, at home with the wind in her hair; her eyes, very wide and open, and of a strange greenish-blue, matching the lights upon the water beneath the morning sun; her arms resting outstretched upon the taff-

rail; her whole body appearing, as the ship beneath her feet, to be ready, and awaiting a gay adventure.

"Nance," said the owner, stepping out on deck, "Mr. Tattersall figures that it's up to you to bring him luck."

Nance Dowser laughed, a laugh like the distant murmur of a strong wind on the sea.

"Oh! yes—I guess," she cried, and added—"I bet Mr. Tattersall loves me like he loves fog when he's making a landfall."

The two men went to the bridge. The crew were coming aboard, climbing over the railing, hauling sea-chests and sea-bags after them; shouting to each other; laughing and swearing—some morose and silent; some cursing the boarding-master, the ship and the sea. Shouldering their dunnage, they betook themselves forward and, tossing their belongings into the fo'csle, stood about the foredeck talking noisily of the shore, the girls and of their last ships.

Leaning over the bridge rail, the skipper called to his mate—

"Heave in, sir."

The hands swarmed upon the fo'csle head, shipping the windlass bars and laying their weight upon them; their feet stamping rhythmically, one of them rousing a chantey—an old song of the sea; the rest lifting the refrain, sending it echoing over the bay; so that the people on the ferry-steamers crowded to the rails to watch and to listen.

Dowser went to the poop and the girl, throwing her arms around his neck, cried—

"Pa, I wish you were coming too."

"Aye, so do I, my girl," he answered her.

An old man, a thin, white-bearded, cadaverous fellow, put his head out of the chart-house door and seeing them touched his finger to his forehead.

"Moses," cried Dowser, "I leave her in your charge."

The old man, stepping from the chart-house, stood before them; looking at Dowser, he said—

"She'll come back, all well—never you fear, sir."

The owner, taking his daughter's hands in his, pressed them close; stooping to kiss her; the girl gazing over the water, wiping her eyes—the sun flashing red strands in her blown brown hair; the ship swaying a little, beneath her feet—dancing to the tides of morning.

"I must be going," he said.

Turning, he hurried from the poop; and calling to his skipper, "Good luck!" disappeared over the ship's side into the waiting boat; to sit watching the ship gather way, her numbers all aflutter at her peak, the ripple swirling about her forefoot; and, catching sight of Moses at the chart-house door, to cry, once more—

"Good luck."

The tug snorted at the tow-line, and the bark, slipping toward the heads, men sprang aloft, loosing white topsails to flap in the salty wind.

II

It was back in those early years just before Nance Dowser was born.

For eighteen days the ship *Nanette* lay becalmed within a degree of the line; the sea motionless, the sky pitilessly blue—no cloud drifting across its hopeless infinity; the sun beating down fiercely upon the decks of the *Nanette*; her sails clewed up, hang-

ing in idle folds from the spars. Under an awning that stretched from side to side of the poop, hidden from the deck by walls of canvas, lay a woman whose strength was ebbing away.

The silence was complete; broken only when, the wheel relieved, the departing helmsman repeated the course to the officer on the bridge—the course a farce, the ship swinging with the ocean currents.

By night the voice of the lookout man, reporting from the fo'csle head, crying along the moonlit deck—"A-l-l-l-l's well, sir," alone disturbed the ghostly silence of the limpid moonlit sea.

Two hours after Nance Dowser came into the world the woman whose name was borne by the becalmed ship died—as a star that dips under the sea rim. That midnight the lookout man was silent, and the helmsman, stealing from the poop, whispered the course.

When dawn came they buried her, lowering her gently from the quarter-railing, wrapped in white canvas; the hands gathering silent, upon the quarter-deck, waiting, respectfully, with bowed heads, till the closing of the little book from which the mate, unused to reading, mumbled one brief prayer; Captain Dowser beside him, staring across the unpitying sea.

It was Moses, the sea-cook, till then the butt of the whole ship's company, who took the child in charge; holding her in his sinewy arms, smiling into her tiny face, while the people of the sea stood by, perplexed and wondering.

Three days after the birth of Nance Dowser the calm broke—three days through which the sea-cook never left the child; Dowser looking hungrily on, helpless, enslaved to an old cook whose every order he

hastened to obey; Tattersall, the mate, taking charge of the ship, bringing her to port, with a skipper whose mind seemed to have gone from all save his child.

The ship, coming to anchorage, he hastened with his little sea-born daughter to see the doctors—fearful of some mischance in her rough nursing. The doctors smiled at him, saying:

“Keep her at sea, captain. She’s as strong as one of your topsails.”

Dowser, a grim horror of the sea upon him, took his ship seaward again—Moses with him.

Close to her second birthday, going to sea once more, he vowed that it should be for the last time; and, when she was four, coming again to anchor off the ferries, turning his ship and all her business over to his mate, he quit the sea.

Tattersall put the ship in drydock, gave her a complete overhaul, and chartered her for Europe.

Dowser, with his little daughter and the old cook, settled beside the water-front at Alameda where, for a month, romping upon the lawn, gathering flowers and sailing to and from the ship with her father and old Moses, the child seemed happy.

She had one doll—an iron-headed thing presented to her by Moses on her third birthday, and long since rebuilt as to arms and legs and trunk—only the iron head remaining indestructible; calling for other needs upon her imagination, and living in a world peopled by folk of strange names invented by herself; seeming to care but little for the company of other children, and at times avoiding them. The doll was named after Moses; and doll Moses and cook Moses were of an importance not surpassed by Dowser himself.

As the weeks passed, the ship preparing for her voyage, the little girl grew less willing to leave after each day spent on board with her father or with Moses—days spent in running here and there about the cabins, up and down the accommodation ladders, shouting to imaginary sailors upon the masts, and calling down the hatches to invisible inhabitants of the between decks' holds.

The time for sailing drawing near, it became evident that she would fret for the ship; for her time between visits was spent in eager anticipation of the delightful company of the unseen crews with which she had peopled the vessel.

One day, a week before the ship was due to sail, Tattersall said:

"Captain Dowser, I reckon you'd better be getting your chest packed. We go to sea a week from to-day."

Sitting at the cabin table, listening to the chatter of the child upon the poop overhead, the two men stared at each other.

When the *Nanette* went through the heads Dowser was upon the bridge.

A few weeks after they had left the Golden Gate, one morning when the hands were washing the decks down, a sailor, coming to the mate, whispered:

"Mister, feel the main latch, sir—in the shade there, under the belly o' the mains'l."

Tattersall did so, and, going aft, blew down the speaking-tube to Dowser's cabin. Meeting him as he stepped on to the poop, he said—

"She's afire below, sir."

Dowser gave the customary orders.

"Everything battened down? Ventilators closed? How's she heading? All right, we'll lay her for Pitcairn."

They laid her course for Pitcairn, a speck in the Pacific, nine hundred miles away; the breeze light, the ship fast becoming an oven, the decks almost too hot to walk upon; obtaining stores from the lazaret well nigh impossible, men lowered with ropes under their arms, grasping whatever they might lay their hands upon in the smoke-filled storeroom, and hauled back unconscious to the deck.

One morning, the wind freshening, the ship tore through the sea under full sail, her lee railing dipping deep in the wash, and the sprays flying in clouds across her decks—her hatches smoking and wisps of smoke stealing from ventilators and from tight shut skylights.

Night falling, a full moon glimmered upon the burning clipper with white crested waves rolling in upon her; her crew gathered upon the poop, waiting, with the unquestioning patience of the sea; the sails ashine in the yellow lights of midnight, porpoises gamboling beneath her bow.

Dowser took the wheel, Moses, with the child in his arms, beside him; the mate on the bridge, searching the seas for a sail.

Day came again, flaming; a tropic day ablaze above a blazing ship, the sea ahead of her hidden under wind-blown clouds of smoke—the skysails set, holding the clipper down, with her railing awash and the sea hissing around her.

Night fell upon her; the moon silvering the fires that seemed to hover over her; Nance Dowser asleep, her head on the old cook's shoulder; her father at the

wheel again, hour after hour, untiring; relieved at the dawn by Tattersall to take his daughter in his arms, pressing her small cheek to his hard face, kissing her—in front of his sailors—and handing her back to old Moses.

Day breaking wide, upon a clipper burning at sea, none spoke of the life-boats—men beneath the spell of the child, the skipper's daughter; ignorant men, waiting, with the old patience of the sea.

At sundown, two miles off shore, the islanders met her, luffed to the wind, with her sails shaking. Their head-man, standing in the bow of the whale-boat hailed her, shaking his head, gesticulating, pointing beyond the horizon; her hands crowding in the mizzen-shrouds, listening, waiting for orders, wondering; watching the skipper and mate conferring together, staring at the island, and along their ship.

Dowser spoke to his mate.

"Shoofly, we can't beach her here. She'd break up in ten minutes. God, I hate to leave her—but I can't ask 'em to stay and take a chance of getting her on a safe beach at Manga Reeve. She'd burn out there, perhaps; and could be refitted and taken to sea again. God, I hate to leave her. But I can't ask 'em to stay."

An old sailor, Reuben Sweeney, a man who from boyhood had followed the sea, a man with great arms and a vast chest, stepped forward, touching his hat, his eyes upon the skipper's daughter.

"Captain, we're with you, sir—you an' little Fancy Nan—where you says, sir, we goes—all on us."

A murmur, a long breath of assent, ran among the gathered sailors—sailors of the square rigged ships.

From the arms of the old sea-cook the child waved

frantically—holding doll Moses up for the islanders to see.

They squared the yards away; their feet scarce able to stand on the decks. To quick orders from the mates they answered with great shouts—singing the braces in.

The *Nanette*, paying off to clear the island, with the wind taking her at her best sailing-point, as if glorying in a new-given freedom, trampled the green seas to a smother below her lifting forefoot; the sea roaring alongside, the wind drumming in her shrouds, the islanders watching her; the old head-man, in the bow of the whale-boat, standing with his face upturned to the sky, from which stars began to flash.

The ship sped away down the green and darkening furrows, the foam creaming her wake, sea-fowl screaming about her.

Night fell and she was gone. From the summit of the island men and women watched her going—seeing a dim glow long after they had lost her in the night.

When night fell once more, the shores of Manga Reeve were rising from the sea. The ship was burning indeed now; fires breaking her decks and tongues of flame sweeping hungrily along them. The courses, foresail, mainsail and cross-jack, had been cut away and left to blow overboard, lest, reaching and feeding upon them, the fires leap to the sails above. Great columns of smoke blew from the doomed ship, hiding the furrows.

Reuben Sweeney was at the wheel, Dowser and the sea-cook with the child beside him.

The child alone had food and, ignorant of danger, knew no fear.

The wind had fallen to a light breeze, the sea rolling

upon the long white beach ahead of the clipper. Captain Dowser spoke to his mate and his mate to the men.

"Stand by! She'll strike in a minute. Unless we can clear the boats it'll be every man for himself."

She struck, going ashore with a slow lurch upon the crest of a long swell; her masts, ripping out of her, going overboard with a great crash; flames shooting from her torn decks, and, met by the intrushing seas, sending clouds of steam about her, mingled with the smoke and the roar of the sea.

For a time the fires were subdued by the intrushing water.

They cleared her boats away, swinging them free, and dropping into them with quiet precision, falling upon their feet and grasping the oars; awaiting orders.

Reuben Sweeney was still at the wheel.

Dowser, speaking to him, he stretched his arms to the cook for the child.

"Doc," he said, "I ain't so old a man as you."

Moses handed her to him and, taking her in his arms, he leaped from the railing to the waiting boat and was gone, Moses following close behind.

Dowser, on the poop, turned to his mate, holding his hand out. They shook, and, with a last look along the decks of the wrecked clipper, left her to her doom.

III

When in the course of time the company of the *Nanette* arrived in San Francisco, the tale of her destruction caused a wave of excitement along the waterfront. There were headlines in the papers, with pictures of imaginary ships driving ashore in flames. Dowser avoided the curious as best he might. The

crew were quickly scattered, and gone to sea again in other vessels.

The *Nanette* was well insured, and Dowser, already well-to-do, suffered no great financial loss in her wreck. But with the old ship a total wreck beyond the hope of salvaging, something seemed to have gone out of his life. Despite the horror of the sea that had come over him after the death of Nance's mother, as long as the *Nanette* floated there had always been a vague sense that she yet lived. Now he felt deserted and alone, and a horror of the sea came upon him with a greater intensity than before.

He settled in Alameda, renting a house near the water; often going with the child to sit upon the beach, where, as if half expecting the white topsails of the *Nanette* to rise above the sea rim, he would gaze fixedly across the bay. Moses stayed with him, doing his cooking and caring for the child.

Tattersall was lost. The sea held no horror for him, but ships were not plentiful and commands were scarce. He hung about the city, watching the shipping come and go, and frequently visiting Dowser.

One afternoon, as they sat beside the water, with Nance at play near by, they saw a little barque come in partially dismasted, and with her boom carried away.

"Been in collision," said Tattersall.

They read of it in the papers the following day. The barque *Diamond*, from the west coast, had been in collision outside the heads—her skipper at fault: standing on when he should have kept clear. Tattersall grunted his disdain.

"Pretty hard to tell, Shoofly," said Dowser. "These lubberly papers have probably got it all mixed."

"Some young fool who ought never to have been given a mate's ticket," growled Tattersall.

On the next day the papers stated that the skipper of the *Diamond* had disappeared. It was supposed that, rather than face the disgrace of an inquiry, he had left his ship and gone to sea with an outbound vessel under an assumed name. Men along the waterfront laughed. Some shook their heads. Dowser was one of these.

"You never can tell, Shoofly," he said.

Tattersall grunted his disdain for one who had failed in the stern law of the sea.

A few days later, while they were in the city together, Dowser, picking up a paper and idly looking down the advertisement columns, cried—

"Let's go look at her, Shoofly."

Tattersall raised his eyebrows inquiringly.

"Look at what?" he asked.

Dowser, placing his finger upon the paper, passed it to him, and, shrugging his shoulders, Tattersall read—

"FOR SALE—Barque *Diamond*"

Together they went to the dock where she was discharging, and found a small clipper-built barque shining from truck to keelson. Her sides were deep green with white painted ports, a light pink below the water-line; her masts and spars white, with both trucks and yard-arms gilded; her skylights, chart-house, fife and topgallant rails of Java teak and finely polished. She glistened with immaculate brass work—bridge rails, ports and binnacles. Her decks, scoured and oiled, were spotless from forecastle head to poop and quarter round. Her rails and deck houses were a light cream;

and her standing rigging, tarred and varnished, flashed back the sunrays.

While Tattersall stood upon the bridge, taking in her every detail, Dowser sat upon the cabin skylight watching Nance play about the poop, doll Moses with her.

"What think of her, Shoofly?" he asked as they went ashore.

Tattersall, nodding his head approvingly, said again—

"Some young fool who ought never to have been given a ticket."

The following afternoon Dowser entered Tattersall's room in the small up-town hotel where he stayed; finding him in his shirt sleeves, trimming his beard. Sitting at the window, overlooking the bay, Dowser watched him in silence for a few moments. Suddenly he spoke.

"Shoofly, I've bought her," he said.

"You've what?" said Tattersall, starting.

"Bought the *Diamond*," replied Dowser, meeting his eye.

Tattersall went on with his trimming.

"We'll fit her out, Shoofly—dress her all up, eh? Make her look like a real little lady and send her to sea. When can you go aboard?"

Tattersall pressed a button, and, the boy coming, said:

"Send an express man here right away. Get my bill—look alive."

Dowser arose to leave the room; and, closing the door, turned.

"We'll change her name, Shoofly," he said. "We'll call her the *Fancy Nan*."

Tattersall, rising from the basin where he was washing his lean face, grunted—

“Unlucky to change a ship’s name.”

Dowser laughed and shut the door.

IV

The barque *Diamond* was discharged, and went to drydock to be overhauled, cleaned and tallowed. Her sides were painted and she was towed to her berth to prepare for sea.

Dowser was worried. Now that his old ship was gone he was through with the sea, but Nance he knew was eager to sail again.

He talked with Tattersall about it, asking advice. Tattersall shrugged his shoulders.

“Better talk to Moses,” he said.

Dowser did so, and the old cook looked him square in the eye.

“If there’s anything that will keep her happy ashore, for God’s sake, doctor, what is it?”

“Buy a farm,” said Moses. Dowser raised his brows in blank surprise.

“A farm! What in thunder would I do with a farm?”

“ ’Tain’t what you’d do with a farm, sir—it’s what she’d do with it. There’s cows on a farm, an’ wobble-tailed calves, an’ chickens an’ ducks, an’ all such like. You try it, sir.”

Dowser decided to try it.

The clipper *Fancy Nan* was beginning to take cargo for Europe on the day when, leaving Nance with Moses, he took train for the country.

In twenty-four hours he was the owner of the River Bottom farm; an old place gone to seed; dilapi-

dated buildings and fields run wild; no stock and no sign of life save for stray pigeons that had taken up their abode in the deserted barns. Below the buildings, at the foot of the bluffs, flowed the river, bank high and swirling amongst the cottonwoods and willows; the house standing upon a bluff overlooking the stream a couple of hundred yards from the buildings.

He reached home to find his daughter asleep and Moses sitting up awaiting his return. As he entered the kitchen Moses looked up inquiringly. Dowser sat down.

"I've taken your advice," he said. "You're a hayseed from now on."

The following day he made an early trip to the bark to see Tattersall, leaving Nance with Moses.

"I'm going to rig the old ruin up, Shoofly. We'll show these hayseed people how a farm should look, eh?" he said, when he had told Tattersall of his purchase.

Tattersall grunted.

There was a limejuice clipper in the stream, cleared for Europe.

"I want another suit of sails," he said. "She's got two suits below and an old suit aloft. I want another suit of new canvas."

"Order anything you need, Shoofly. Fit her out right. Overhaul her and do as you please. That limejuicer bound your way?"

Tattersall nodded his head.

Dowser went ashore.

"See you when you get back," he said; and saw no more of the *Fancy Nan*. She sailed on the heels of the limejuicer, and he, accompanied by Nance and Moses, took train for the farm.

The River Bottom farm had but few neighbors. The country thereabout was devoted almost exclusively to grain growing. Such neighbors as dropped over found an uncommunicative man, quite willing, however, to listen to all they had to say about farming. The women, met at the house by a cadaverous party who, remarking—"Skipper's on deck," closed the door upon them, ceased calling after one attempt.

A mile down the road was a little school, which Nance attended. Beyond the school was the Upland farm, owned by De Witt, a close-fisted old fellow who had struggled upward from being a day laborer, and was hard at work clearing off the last of his debts. He was as uncommunicative as Dowser and, once acquainted, the two became good friends.

Once, during the rush of work on the Bottom farm, when Dowser was short of help, De Witt arrived with his team, helping till the rush was over and refusing any pay for his services.

"Reckon you'd do the same by me," he said.

De Witt laughed at Dowser's "new-fangled" notions, ridiculing his cow tester.

"Them there professors has got you fooled, neighbor, with their highfalutin' ideas," he said.

"Don't doubt it, De Witt. You're the sort would still be hoisting double tops'ls and setting up lanyard rigging—no question of that."

"I ain't bin to none o' them places you speaks of; but I do reckon to hev run a string o' cows."

"How d' you reckon I get the prices for my calves I do?" Dowser, who had stocked his farm with registered cattle, would ask.

"Neighbor, you got 'em all fooled with your high-

'falutin' idees—that's what there is to that; just like you falls fer them professors yourself."

Thus they argued, remaining excellent friends.

Mrs. De Witt, a woman with one son, ever longing for a daughter, came over to see Nance once or twice. Out of Nance she got but small satisfaction, while Nance appeared indifferent as to whether she came or not. Invited to go to the Upland farm, she returned home disgusted with the dirt, the smells, and the countless swarms of flies about the place.

Dowser had hired a foreman, a quiet man, of past middle age, recommended to him by the people at the creamery in town. He left the management of the farm to him; watching him closely, and constantly making suggestions. When he had been one year on the place the River Bottom farm was totally changed; flowers blossoming about the house, and the long neglected fruit trees behind the house as well as the thirsty cottonwoods at the gate taking on a new lease of life.

Moses had early built a boat, a flat-bottomed affair, in which he and Nance spent many hours on the wide sloughs bordering the river, fishing and rowing. In summer, after the snow-water had subsided with the passing of the June heat-wave, Nance swam in the deep holes alongside the bank in the shade of the overhanging willows and box elders.

The foreman, putting the calves in her charge, and Moses teaching her to cook and to keep house, she was never idle from the time she arose, soon after dawn, until she had fed the calves after the evening milking.

Immediately after the purchase of the farm the *Fancy Nan* was away for four years on foreign char-

ters. On returning to the coast she went to Portland, with general cargo from Europe, and Dowser, going to see her and her skipper, found her trimmer than ever; glistening fore and aft, and the talk of the water-front. Tattersall already had her chartered for the Cape with grain, and was hastening her discharge.

Upon Dowser's return to the farm Nance was eager for news of the ship. But for her preoccupation with an ailing calf she would have insisted upon accompanying him to Portland. He told her that the *Fancy Nan* was at sea again and would probably be away for some years. Nance, busy with her pets and her schooling, seemed to forget the sea.

Letters came from Tattersall from the Cape. The *Fancy Nan* had made the run in fifty days, beating the Liverpool *Glenesslin* by a full week.

"How was that?" he asked, adding—"she has never lost a rope yarn yet."

Dowser, replying, asked, "What's the matter with changing a ship's name now?" And got word from Melbourne, saying that she was matched against the London clipper *Brilliant* for the run to Falmouth.

Nance wrote to him, telling him to bring the barque to San Francisco.

"I want to make a voyage with her," she said.

Dowser, seeing her letter, wrote another.

"Keep her on foreign charters as long as you can. The girl is forgetting the deep water."

Dowser was mistaken.

Each time the barque made port and news of her came, Nance was eager to know whether she were upon the homeward passage yet. Whenever she was reported from sea, and her position given, Nance figured

the date when she might be due in. There came a letter from Tattersall, after he had been three years out from Portland, saying that he was chartering her at a high freight for San Francisco direct.

Six months later a telegram came, and Nance receiving it, took it to her father. The barque had been a long time at sea—meeting the full fury of August gales off the Horn, and Dowser had been wondering what had happened to Tattersall. Now she was sighted outside the heads and was due in directly.

Next day came a telegram from Tattersall himself. It said:

"Five weeks off Stiff. Six men lost."

Nance was all excitement.

That night she came to her father's room and, sitting on the arm of his chair, looked at the pictures on the wall—a full rigged clipper with her three skysails set and her lee railing awash in the sea; beneath her the *Fancy Nan*, with hands aloft stowing the royals as she came to anchorage.

"Where's she bound for?" asked the girl.

"I'm not sure yet—might be anywhere," replied Dowser.

Nance laughed.

"That'll be fine," she cried. "I'd love to sail for anywhere."

"We'll all go, won't we, pa?" she asked.

"Maybe we will," he said and tried to turn the subject.

The upshot of it was that when the barque went out through the Golden Gate again she went with Dowser in command; for Tattersall refused to go to sea with

him a passenger. Moses was signed on as steward's mate; a position invented solely for him to fill.

When the barque dipped to the swells upon the bar Nance stood upon the bridge, her long hair flying on the wind.

"Give her the skysail, pa," she cried.

"Want to tip her over, girl?" replied Dowser.

Nance laughed, clapping her hands, crying—

"Give her the skysail, pa—let's see what the *Fancy Nan* is made of."

Tattersail, on the bridge, grunted.

"Women's out of place on a ship," he said to himself.

The barque was under royals, her lee rail awash, sprays flying across her deck, forward. The girl laid a hand on Tattersall's arm.

"Mr. Tattersall, we didn't sail the old *Nanette* this way, did we?" she asked.

Tattersall grunted. He did not know the girl could still see the old *Nanette*, the smoke wreaths whirling round her, the sea seething alongside, as they raced her, under three skysails, for the shore of Manga Reeve.

Nance pleaded with him.

"Won't you give her that skysail?" she asked.

Tattersall gazed at the weather to windward, where the breeze whipped white horses across the windy sea meadows. The shore was fading from sight. Coming up astern was an outbound China mail boat, the black smoke belching from her funnels. His eye glinted as he watched her sharp bow plow the furrows. Dowser caught his eye, questioning. Dowser blew his whistle and the second mate ran aft.

"Give her that main skysail," said the owner.

The *Fancy Nan* tossed a spray across her foredeck, dancing to the piping wind. Smoke belched from the funnels of the China mail. Dowser, watching her, grinned. Tattersail stared at her, frowning. Forward the hands said:

"The old man's a cracker on. We're going to make a passage."

They crouched under the rail, watching the steamer, making bets upon the time they'd be to Queenstown. Men told of fast runs of old clippers, muttering about stuns'ls and bull-whangers.

"The *Marching King* made it to Sydney in sixty days," said one.

"Aye—an' old Barford spilled her over on the very next v'yage; an' down she went wi' all hands," said another.

Dowser's whistle sounded along the decks shrilly above the wind's piping.

"Check the weather braces in a trifle—just a trifle, sir," he said.

Tattersail grunted. His eyes glinted. The hands, running to the braces, hauled in, singing out as they did so—

"Yo-o-o-o-oh-oh-oh-ho-ho-ho-ho-haul-away-oh!"

Dowser went to the wheel.

"Watch your course," he said.

The helmsman, an ancient man with wrinkle-hidden eyes, cast a disdainful glance at the steamer astern. The stokers were sweating at her fires. She vibrated fore and aft. She smelt of hot oils and of grease. People leaned over her railing, wishing the sea would swallow them up, their souls sinking at the thought of the voyage to China. From her bridge the skipper scowled at the swift-heeled sailing ship ahead; signal-

ing to his engine room. The steamer shuddered as they drove her through the beam sea, rolling as a village wife homebound from weekly market—full of old ale, thinking the highways all her own.

The *Fancy Nan*, catching a puff in her white wings, lay over, dipping her rail in the green sea, tossing the sprays high about her, the bow wash slapping noisily about her weather bow; the sea creaming to lee; her wake a gay garland of emerald and pearl.

Nance Dowser, standing on the poop, watched the China mail plowing the crumbling furrows. Her hair flew on the wind, the sun flashing red strands in it. The helmsman caught a glimpse of her, as he looked along the deck watching the lift of the bow. He tightened his grip upon the kicking wheel.

"They say she was born at sea," he had heard some one say in the fo'csle.

The barque lay on her course as a hound that sees the stag running through the bracken—swerving neither to weather nor lee. Dowser stood beside his daughter. She looked up at him, the lights of the sea shining in her face, and laughing, cried:

"The China mail's falling astern, pa. By night she'll be hull down."

Dowser smiled at her, looking toward the China mail, and aloft and along the decks. Going to the bridge he spoke to his mate.

"Keep her as she is, Shoofly—she'll stand it, eh?"

Tattersall grunted, his eyes glinting. The bark, diving to a long hollow, lifted her forefoot from the farther crest, trampling the sea to a white smother about her.

Cook Moses, coming from the cabin, stared over the water; the wind blowing his long beard. He

wincing, a twinge of rheumatism racking his bones. He heard the owner's daughter laughing as the barque dipped her bows to the sea and, forgetting his aches, went to the cabin whistling a chantey tune.

Night fell upon the sea. The China mail was a dark speck to the eastward. The sun had gone, leaving a trail of crimson flaming the sky. Over the steamer a star twinkled and was lost again. Far forward, under the fo'c'sle head, a sailor was tuning a fiddle; sailors about him waiting to dance to it. Darkness gathered and the China mail was lost in the night. The *Fancy Nan* danced alone, as a witch amidst the purpling heather. An iron bell clanged above the murmur of the sea and wind and fiddle's music. The watches were set, the wheel and the lookout relieved. A sailor, coming from the wheel, gave the mate the course. The lookout man's voice, reporting from the fo'c'sle head, rang along the decks, slowly, as the dying music of an old sea chorus—

"A-l-l-l-l's well, sir."

v

Making the run to Queenstown in a hundred and five days, the barque received her orders outside, and proceeded to the Elbe to discharge, with a stiff sou'wester on her quarter. Nance stood upon the poop as she passed between the rows of ships at anchor in the Downs, awaiting a wind to take them to sea.

There were outbound London clippers for the Cape and Rio Grande and for the colonies; a double-stayed saltpeter-man from Hamburg, and topsail schooners for the coasting trade; rust-ribbed tramps for anywhere, and a long black-funnel liner snorting out to sea heedless of weather in her teeth.

They dipped their colors as the *Fancy Nan* slipped past them; Dowser flying the great silk flag that was kept for such occasions in the chart-house locker; the sou'west wind rippling its long folds, and its stars flashing over the morning sea. The passengers aboard the outbound liner crowded to the rail to watch the white-winged clipper speeding past, crying—

“She’s from around the Horn—from San Francisco—a Yankee clipper; see her fly?”

“From around the Horn?” they repeated, staring at her; picturing icebergs and hurricanes and terrors of undreamed-of seas.

“There’s a woman on her deck,” cried some one; and women in warm robes hastened to the rail to watch the clipper from around the Horn go by—a sailing clipper with a woman on her deck—the *Fancy Nan*, treading the narrow waters as a girl treads dewy meadows on a flowered morning.

Discharging at Hamburg, she towed across to the Tyne for loading; and on a May morning, when the wild flowers were breaking to bloom under the hedges of England, stole away seaward again—to the meadows that are fenceless and free.

Dowser, watching the light of St. Catherine’s fade astern, stood with his mate upon the bridge.

“My last voyage, Shoofly. I’m getting old,” he said.

Tattersall stared across the fields of the sea, lighted by the full moon; gleaming with spangles of silver.

“Shoofly, you’d better quit the sea and come and live ashore. Buy a farm and run a string of cows,” said Dowser; and his mate, watching the main truck against a star, cried to the helmsman—

“Watch your course.”

Nance joined them; standing at her father’s side,

watching the sea lights shine. He placed his arm about her shoulder.

"It'll be good to be home again, girl, eh?" he said; and she snuggled against him. The wind piped amongst the shrouds, clouds drifting over the moon.

Moses, coming to the quarter-deck, leaned upon the railing, staring across the sea, the wind blowing his white beard. Nance, seeing him there, left the bridge to join him. Laying her head against his arm—

"Moses," she asked, "how old are you now?"

He looked at her face, with the moon shining on it.

"Old enough to know better," he said.

"Oh! Moses," she cried, "how old *are* you?"

He waved an arm, encircling the moonlit sea with a gesture.

"Old enough to know better," said he. "This ain't no place for a woman."

The wind blowing his beard, he winced with the pains of rheumatism.

"See yonder! There's a steamer coming up-channel," he said.

Looking where he pointed, she saw the mast-head lights of a steamer twinkling above the sea, and went to the bridge to watch her pass; aflame with bright lights, her decks crowded with people; coming close to the sailing ship that curious folk might see her.

They crowded her decks to watch the *Fancy Nan* go by; the moonlight on her sails, her gilded trucks and yard-arms shining.

"I wonder where she's going?" asked one.

"Might be anywhere," replied another.

"Might be Sydney, Calcutta, or Hongkong," a deck hand answered. "Might be 'Frisco, Rio Grande or Grand Canary."

Mr. Tattersall stared at the liner disdainfully, grunting.

"Was you ever in steam?" asked one sailor of another.

"Once—never again," replied the other.

"'Tain't nothin' but swab an' paint," said a third.

They sat under the lee of the forward deck-house as the steamer faded astern, talking of ships.

"A man what follows the sea is a damn fool," said one.

"Aye, that's wot you are, son," said another. "You an' me both."

"They say the owner's got a farm ashore," said the first speaker.

"Who wouldn't sell a farm an' go to sea?" another questioned.

The iron bell clanged above the pipe of the wind and the wash of the sea. Gathering aft they answered to their names; the voice of the lookout man crying from the fo'csle head, slowly, as an old sea chorus dying on the night,

"Al-l-l-l's well, sir."

Holding a leading wind for many days she ran down the trade latitudes, and beating into head winds off the Plate came at length to misty weather as she neared the Horn.

One morning, while making four or five knots, the weather hazy and the wind unsteady, a hand reported a boat on the lee bow. The skipper and the mate searched the sea with glasses; Nance beside them, filled with excitement.

The haze thickening, Dowser ordered the main yards

aback; heaving her to to wait and watch awhile. He sent for the man who had reported the boat.

"Are you sure of it? Sure it was a boat you saw?"

"Aye, 'twas a boat, sir, sure enough."

"Probably the back of a whale, or a black-fish," growled Tattersall.

"Beg pardon, sir, 'twas a boat; white painted, plain as my nose, sir."

The barque lay lifting idly to the swell, her main yard aback and men gathered in groups about the decks peering through the haze. Tattersall tramped impatiently up and down the bridge, anxious to fill the yards and lay her on her course again.

"Fair winds are scarce off the Horn, sir; better be getting along," he said.

"An open boat off the Horn's hell," answered Dowsler. "I guess we'd better lay to awhile and watch."

Suddenly he shouted:

"There she is!" adding, "Tattersall, get a boat cleared away at once."

Through the lifting haze they saw, a mile on the bow, a ship's boat; a man standing in her, and waving a rag of canvas lashed to an oar, endeavoring to attract their attention.

The wind was freshening a little.

"Better go off to her, Shoofly. Take three men who can put weight on an oar. Look alive—weather's changing."

Tattersall dropped into the boat.

"Make it lively," he said, as the sailors lay back on their oars. The wind was blowing up.

From the other boat a man was frantically waving. As they drew near they heard him shouting and Tattersall waved a reply.

They came up with a steamer's boat, the name *Tekoa* painted on her bow, and, pulling alongside, found four men in her; two of them lying prone in her bottom, huddled under a sail; one sitting on a thwart, listlessly, paying no heed to them. The man who had waved seized his shoulders, shaking him, crying:

"Wake up, wake up, it's all well. We're picked up."

Rising, staring at the boat from the *Fancy Nan*, curiously, as if half awaking from a dream, he clambered toward her.

"Hell!" he muttered, "ain't it hell?" His hands were frozen and he stumbled upon frozen feet.

They helped him aboard, and two men from the barque's boat, boarding the derelict, raised the men from her bottom; lifting them with difficulty, for, wind and sea rising, the boats rose with quick rolls on the chop. Looking about his boat for a moment the man who had waved, shaking his head, said—

"Got to quit her, I guess," and, climbing over the gunwhale, fell and lay as if exhausted in the bottom at Tattersall's feet.

"Give way men, make it lively," cried Tattersall, heading for the barque.

The wind was rising fast, a cap whipping over the crests, and beyond the barque the sea was hidden in a scudding mist.

"Give way, make it lively—use your weight," cried Tattersall, as, drifting over the water, the mist half hid her, her sails looming faint and phantom-like through its wet folds. Suddenly she was gone, lost in the fog; and they were alone upon the cold Horn sea.

From over the water they heard, faintly, above the

lap of the sea, voices crying. Tattersall, leaning forward, peering into the mist, cried constantly—

“Lively, make it lively.”

Climbing to a thwart the man who had waved from the steamer’s boat grasped an oar, pushing it out, every movement racking him. The voices were growing closer, and Tattersall, a hand to his lips, answered. The shape of the lost barque loomed suddenly above them, and in another moment they were under her side.

The rescued men were tended in the cabin of the *Fancy Nan*; the skipper’s daughter bringing them food and steaming coffee. The young man, who had waved from the boat, told their story.

“*Tekoa*, sir. Greenock to Puget Sound. She struck in thick weather off Magellan somewhere, about a week ago. I was sent with the boat to try to see the damage, when she backed off. Dense fog set in and we lost her. I was second mate, sir.”

Recovering slowly from their exposure, room was made for the three men forward; while a bunk was fitted up for the second mate in the room occupied by Moses.

His name was John Lowrie, a Britisher from Cornwall; a quiet sort of man with deep-brown eyes and reddish hair, a clean-shaven face, and regular white teeth that showed when he smiled. He was a man of medium height, but of unusual width, even for a sailor. They took a liking to him—a reticent man who had nothing to say about himself.

Dowser questioned him, asking him about the lime-juice ships. He held an extra master’s ticket—something that neither Dowser nor Tattersall had ever seen. He had held a command in sail, going to sea at sixteen and being third at nineteen and mate at twenty-one.

He had been master of the *Linlithgow*—one of the fast Scotch county clippers, a four-masted barque. Now in steam, he was starting after the manner of the service, from the bottom once more.

"A bit too big, sir. I like a handier ship, but a man at sea can't choose," he said of the *Linlithgow*.

"What do you think of this little packet?" asked Dowser.

Lowrie smiled, showing his white teeth.

"She's my style of a ship, sir; handy and a fine sea boat. Where did you get her queer name?"

Dowser told him of the burning of the old *Nanette*, and of how Reuben Sweeney had carried Nance off her.

"When I bought this barque I changed her name from *Diamond* to *Fancy Nan*," he said.

Lowrie frowned, starting; and shaking his head said:

"Unlucky, sir—unlucky to change a ship's name. She'll bring you trouble if you don't look out."

Dowser, laughing, called to Nance.

"Mr. Lowrie says the ship is going to bring us trouble—what do you think of that, Nance?" he asked.

Looking up at them from the quarter-deck, the star-shine in her wide eyes, she smiled.

"I'm not scared," she said, "I'll go anywhere she takes me, and take what she brings."

"I hope you get a heap of luck, Miss Dowser; but the sea's a hard place," said Lowrie.

"Oh!" she cried, "you are as bad as Moses—too bad you have to room with him. I bet it's he who's getting such things to your mind."

Lowrie laughed.

"No, Miss Dowser, it isn't Moses. I've seen it before. I saw the old *Narwhale* go to sea after they

changed her from the *Isabella*. You know what came of her."

"I've never heard of her. What did, Mr. Lowrie?" asked the girl.

"Mutiny and bloody murder, miss—abandoned at sea and set afire. They picked up the skipper's daughter in an open boat, crazy as a flitter-bat. Every one else was lost."

Nance gave a little scream.

"Good heavens, you are cheerful. Is that the sort of yarn they spin in the dog-watch on a limejuice ship?"

Lowrie, looking down at her upturned face, answered her.

"I hope you get a heap of luck, Miss Dowser. I owe my life to you and to your ship. I'm not likely to forget that."

Turning to Dowser he said—

"By the way, this chap Moses, is he a Buddhist, or what?"

"I never heard him mention any brand of religion," replied Dowser. "Why do you ask?"

"He's got a battered old thing that I supposed must be a heathen idol of some variety stuck against the bulkhead in the room. I asked him who it was the other evening when I found him sitting staring at it; and turning to me, with a funny look on his face, he said:

"'She'll fetch the ship luck. Never you fear.'"

"I guess that must be what's left of doll Moses," laughed Dowser.

"What do you mean? Doll Moses? I don't get you, sir?"

"Doll Moses and cook Moses used to share Nance about equally at one time. Doll was given to her by

cook when she was a little thing. Nance outgrew Doll quite a while ago; and I suppose that Moses must have taken up with her. Moses was cook of the old *Nanette*; and but for him Nance would have died when she lost her mother." Dowser's voice had fallen and his head was bowed.

"Nance has always been heaven and earth to the old cook," he added.

Entering the Golden Gate, the *Fancy Nan* came to anchor one hundred and twelve days out from Tyne-side.

"My last voyage, and a fine one," said Dowser, as, standing on the poop with Tattersall and Nance and Lowrie, he watched the mists rise above the ferry building, and the sunlight glimmer through upon the waters of the bay.

"I'll be content upon the farm from now on," he added.

"Got a taste for farming, have you, sir?" asked Lowrie.

"Got more than that. We've got a farm. Haven't we, Nance?"

"We certainly have," said Nance. "Mr. Lowrie, you'd better come and look it over. Maybe we'll give you a job milking, or pitching hay. How'd you like that?"

"I'm coming to look it over one of these days, sure enough, Miss Dowser. Just now I've got to find out what came of the old *Tekoa*. If she's afloat she's got a lot of my things aboard her. There's a trifle of a pay-day owing to me too. But don't you forget, Miss Dowser, some of these days you'll see me stroll up the road to your farm."

Boats were coming off to the ship; the health officer,

boarding masters, photographers, tailors, and the many who made a living from the ships and their money-free sailors.

Tattersall and Dowser left the poop, leaving Nance and Lowrie together. The deck became a scene of bustle as the people from shore mingled with the sailors. A tug was coming off to the barque; for an outbound cargo already awaited her, and she was to go at once to her discharging berth. Tattersall ordered the hands to the windlass to heave the anchor in again, and they went, singing and shouting. The shore-folks, ordered off the ship, left her reluctantly. The wind had died away and the water was unruffled. The song of the men, stamping around the windlass, echoed over the bay.

"Are you leaving the sea for good too, Miss Dowser?" asked Lowrie, as they listened to the song.

"Oh! I don't think so. No. I'll always want to go back for one more voyage, I think," she answered.

"There's something about it that gets into one's blood and stays there," said Lowrie, adding, "but it's no place for a woman, after all."

They were silent, listening to the chantey chorus:

*"A-rovin', a-rovin', oh, rovin's been my ruin.
I'll go no more a-rovin' with you, fair maid."*

"Miss Dowser," said Lowrie, "I'd like to make another voyage with you. I don't feel that rovin' has been my ruin at all. Not yet."

Nance blushed, and Lowrie added:

"I'll tell you just one thing—I don't like the idea of this ship's having had her name changed. It's not lucky."

Nance laughed.

"I think you are funny. I'll go wherever she takes me; and take what she brings," she said.

The barque was moving toward the wharf and, coming from the chart-house, Dowser handed Lowrie a paper. He took it eagerly, turning to the shipping-news.

"Listen," he cried—

"S. S. Tekoa leaves Vancouver for San Francisco, to finish loading for Antwerp, on Tuesday next."

"That's an old paper, Mr. Lowrie. Your ship's about due in now, isn't she?" asked Nance, looking at the date on the paper.

A whistle sounding across the water, they turned to look. A huge and rusty tramp, with one black funnel, was slowing down as she came to anchor between the ferries and Goat Island.

"Sailor's luck," cried Lowrie. "There's the old tub herself."

"I believe I'd sooner take my luck going to sea with the *Fancy Nan*, even though her name has been changed, than go to sea with such an ugly old coal-box as that," said Nance.

Lowrie looked at her, smiling.

"I believe I would too, Miss Dowser," he said.

Nance Dowser blushed, and Lowrie, turning to the owner said:

"I guess I'll be saying so-long, sir. I'll be getting aboard that dainty coal-basket. No end of thanks, sir, for picking us up."

They shook hands, and Lowrie raised his hat to Nance. Holding her hand out to him, she said—

"Don't forget we'll be looking for you on the farm."

"I'll not forget," he answered her, and went from the bridge of the *Fancy Nan* on his way to the *Tekoa*.

VI

Dowser, turning the bark and all her business over to Tattersal, caught a train; and he and Nance were on the River Bottom farm before the sun went down. Everything was as they had left it. There were a few more calves and a number of huge haystacks. Nelson, the foreman, greeted them with pleasure in his face, knowing that none could have done better than he, and glad to turn the responsibility over to Dowser. Moses was with them and, becoming immediately busy in the kitchen, they sat down to a "shore-going" supper, as Nance called it.

Dowser asked for the news. News of interest to Nelson he had none, and the talking was all on Nelson's side. Talking slowly and with great deliberation he told them how the country had changed immensely since they had gone away, and that, new settlers having come in in great numbers, where there had been but one neighbor before there were now half a dozen. The country had been subdivided and cut up into small farms of ten, twenty and forty acres. The town had grown; boasting two new creameries and a milk factory. Real estate was booming, and real estate men calling frequently at the farm to inquire if it were for sale.

Next morning, at sunrise, Nance hoisted the numbers of the *Fancy Nan* to the peak of the tall flagstaff before the house, the morning breeze fluttering the bright flags, and their gay colors shining in the sun.

From their farmyards and doorways the neighbors,

seeing the flags, wondered what was going on at the River Bottom farm. The place had always been a mystery to them; for the old Swede foreman would never satisfy their curiosity by telling them his owner's business.

That afternoon one or two of the most inquisitive went over and, finding a bald-headed man wandering amongst the stock, with a young girl beside him, became more than ever curious; finding it impossible to draw either into any conversation other than remarks upon the weather—the farmer's invariable theme—a subject completely ignored by sailors ashore.

Going away puzzled, they sent their women, who needed no sending. The women, meeting at the door an old man, with a long white beard, who, muttering, "skipper's on deck," shut the door upon them, were scandalized. Seeing a young woman strolling among the flowers, they addressed themselves to her; to be met with polite replies that gave them no satisfaction.

Their curiosity whetted, they went home as perplexed as their men had been before them.

"Cain't be his wife; she's too young," said one.

"Ef it's his wife, then it's a scandal an' a shame; she's that young," said another.

"Ain't she the homeliest thing?" queried an angular woman with a red mole on the starboard side of her nose.

"Ef it's his daughter 'tain't not right fer no young woman ter live alone with a lot of old men," said another.

The grown folk having met with no success, it devolved upon the young people to solve the mystery of the Bottom farm; and they dropped over, in twos and threes and singly.

Meeting Dowser, the boys would raise their hats.

"Want something, boy?" he would ask.

"No, sir—I just dropped over."

Dowser, reared in the hard rearing of the sea, with little use for young men with idle time on their hands, would reply—

"Maybe you'd better be dropping back, eh?"

Girls, meeting him, found a different greeting.

"Hello, sis, looking for some one?"

"Why, I just heard there was a lady over here, sir. I thought maybe she was lonesome."

"Well, it's kind of you to come over. My girl isn't much given to the lonesome idea, I guess. You'll find her somewhere about the place."

Meeting Nance, they found a girl who was quite disinterested in hats or dresses; who appeared to know as much, if not more, of housekeeping than did their own mothers; and appeared to be perfectly able to amuse herself with no assistance.

Little by little the curiosity of the neighborhood died away; the immediate neighbors becoming to some extent gradually acquainted with Dowser.

The young men of the countryside were deeply interested in Nance. Her father being a sea captain meant something which they were unable to put into words; giving her a halo of romance quite apart from any fascination about herself.

Every one in the district realized that Dowser was "well fixed" and naturally every parent was anxious that his son should win Nance Dowser. Most of the farmers were struggling against debt—which was evidently not a bugbear on the River Botton farm. Old Nelson paid good wages, seeing that he got good help

in return, of course; and himself working indefatigably, month in and month out, in the fields beside the men.

"Nelson, you ought to have been a sailor," said Dowser one day, when the old man was getting in the third cutting of alfalfa and the thermometer stood at a hundred and ten in the shade.

"You were cut out for bosun of a three-skys'l clipper," he added.

"Maybe so, Mr. Dowser. Maybe you iss right," answered Nelson. "I had two brothers once and both of them was drowned at sea. My father, he was drowned at sea. I was to go to sea too, but my old mother, she begged it out of me. 'Peter,' she says, 'let's go to America an' forget the cold sea.' That's how I came to America, sir. We were from up by Bergen way. When the old lady died, then I was grown too old to go to sea. It's fine to travel around and to see things, Mr. Dowser. But my old mother, she cried me away from the sea."

Nelson and Moses were cronies. Nelson, beside Moses, was young. There was the same air of quiet confidence about them both.

They lived together in the back of the house, sharing a room, as a steward and the bosun used to do on the clippers.

Old De Witt was still on the Upland farm, working as tirelessly as ever, refusing to sell his land, but preferring to dig out of debt by unceasing toil. It was not till Dowser had been home a week that he arrived at the Bottom farm. There had been a rush of work in his hay-fields, and neither he nor his wife had had a spare moment. Now he came over, bringing his son;

a tall hard-working lad eager to see all there was to be seen.

As they walked homeward after visiting Dowser, and seeing his stock and their clean corrals, and spotless white-painted barns, the boy talked enthusiastically of the place.

Old De Witt grunted.

"Reckon you think your old paw don't know nuthin' nohow," he said.

"Oh! you're all right, paw—but I reckon you ain't jest up ter date," answered the boy.

Clyde De Witt became a frequent visitor at the River Bottom farm; often helping in the hay-fields, or running the turbine separator for old Nelson. He liked the place, sweet-scented and clean; the house smelling of flowers and of the hay-fields beyond it—where at home everything was subdued to the smells from the corrals and the pig-pens.

Old mother De Witt scolded her son for his constant attendance at the Bottom farm.

"Looks like you ain't got no sense at all, Clyde. There's a right smart lot o' nice girls without you a-goin' moonin' arter that there Nance Dowser."

"Mebbe so, maw," he would answer her. "But I'll tell you Captain Dowser's a right smart man, an' Nance takes arter him. She's bin around some, too, Nance has."

"She ain't not near as smart as wot Ora Kelly be; an' she ain't got nothin' like her looks."

"Ory Kelly? Why, maw—Ory Kelly don't know nuthin' outside o' six miles o' the Kelly place. She's pretty all right; but ef she don't quit a-puttin' herself in my way I'm a-goin' ter call her down. She makes me fair sick."

VII

One day Clyde De Witt went over to the River Bottom farm, searching for Dowser; and found him seated under the trees in front of the house reading the paper. Nance was away in the Bottoms. Dowser nodded to him.

"Want something?"

"Yes, Mr. Dowser. I sure do," replied the boy.

"What's on your mind?" asked Dowser, laying down his paper and looking inquiringly at the boy.

"A lot of things, sir. Maybe you kin help me out. It's thisaway, sir. I cain't help it; ain't no feller could. I wants your gal, sir, Nance; but I know there ain't no show fer me. I ain't in her class. She's bin around an' I ain't. You've got no use fer me I don't reckon, an' I'd like fer you to hev. You folks is up to the notch, an' my paw an' maw ain't an' never will be. They're sot in their ways, sir. I want to know, Mr. Dowser, wot I kin do so's you-all'll hev a better opinion of me. Then mebbe some day I'll be able ter tell your gal the way I feels."

Dowser looked hard at the boy.

"How old are you, boy?" he asked.

"Nineteen, sir."

"You've got lots of time ahead. Plow your own furrow and see what comes of it. Your pa grew up doing his own digging, and so did I. I like a man to shift for himself. I've got nothing to advise you. Pull your own oar—if there's man in you it'll come out."

For a minute young De Witt stood looking at Dowser, then said:

"Thank you, sir. I reckon I'll not bother you for awhile." Then he turned away.

A few days after young De Witt's visit Nance sat sewing beneath the trees in front of the house. It was the Fall of the year and the still air was fragrant with the scent of the fields, where the last cutting of hay stood in the shock. The only sound that reached her was the occasional rattle of a buck-rake wheel, or the far-off voice of a man who spoke to his team. Suddenly, hearing a footstep near by, she started, and looking up, saw a man coming through the gate between the two tall cottonwoods. Rising, she held out her hand.

"Mr. Lowrie, it's fine to see you," she cried.

"Thank you, Miss Dowser. I've come to look at the farm, as you told me to."

Nance called her father. He was down at the stackyard, and she ran in to get her hat. They walked to the yard together.

"Tell me where you've been, Mr. Lowrie, please. Quick, I want to hear," she cried.

"Oh," he laughed, "that's a big order all of a sudden. Let's see. I went back to Liverpool with the old *Tekoa*, didn't I? Yes. Well, I left her and took a trip with a Rennie boat to Natal and Delagoa, Chinde and those little fever-holes up the East African coast, you know. Then went to Mobile with a Drum Line tramp. Then was lucky—skipper of the *Roxburgh* for a voyage. I was with the county ships before, you know; before you picked me out of the water that time off Stiff. I took her to the colonies and made a fast run too. By the way, where's the *Fancy Nan*?"

"Somewhere between the Cape and the Horn, I guess," answered Nance. "She's bound for the Cape

and I suppose will be coming home with coal, from Newcastle. Isn't it a shame to load a clipper with such a horrid cargo?"

They were at the stackyard gate, standing aside to let a buck-rake pass. As they stood there Dowser came around a stack and held out his hand to Lowrie.

"Where did you blow in from?" he asked.

"I left my ship in 'Frisco, sir. Doctor's orders. Got a screw loose somewhere. The doc said it was probably started that time we spent a week in the *Tekoa's* boat off the Horn—too much exposure. I had a couple of them overhaul me from truck to keelson. They told me to stick ashore for a while in a warm climate. I thought I'd come and look your farm over on the way, sir."

Lowrie stayed a while on the farm; learning to drive a team and to milk a cow; rowing about in the bottoms with Nance while she fished, and listened to his tales of the sea.

One day, when old De Witt was short of help, Lowrie accompanied Nelson to the Upland farm, where Clyde at once became deeply interested in him. The old man took a liking to him.

"Never seed a feller pitch so much hay in a day; an' I've seed a many," he said.

To young De Witt, asking questions of the world outside, he spoke of Singapore and Rio Grande, Taltal and Teneriffe—places of which Clyde had never heard.

Nance, delighted to see him again, plied him with questions of the sea and the ports.

"I haven't seen the sea for three years," she said.

Lowrie smiled at her, saying:

"It'll always be there, Miss Dowser; and always the same."

"Oh!" she would say, "I want to go to sea again."
And Lowrie would reply—

"The sea's no place for a woman—not really."
She laughed at him.

"You and Moses ought to be brothers," she said.

Moses, bent with age, his beard quite white, seventy and looking eighty, but still active and imperious, and rarely troubled now with rheumatism, scowled when he saw Lowrie arrive.

Nelson liked him.

"I was to have been a sailor, too," he would say, as they walked together from the barns, "I had two brothers once, and both of them was drowned at sea. My father, he was drowned at sea. I was to go to sea too; but my old mother, she cried it out of me. 'Let's go to America, Peter,' she says, 'an' forget the cold sea.' That's how I come to America, sir. It's fine to travel and see things: but my old mother, she cried me away from the sea."

One day Lowrie knocked at the door of Dowser's room, and Dowser, sitting looking at the pictures of the old *Nanette*, and of the *Fancy Nan*, of Nance and of her mother, called to him to come in.

"What's on your mind?" he asked.

Lowrie gazed at the old *Nanette* with her three sky-sails set and the sea lapping over her railing.

"Mr. Dowser," he said, "there's much on my mind, sir. I owe you my life. I don't forget that. You need not have hove your ship to, that morning off the Horn."

He was silent for a minute, Dowser staring at him.

"Captain Dowser," he said, rising to his feet, as if they were aboard, and he addressing his commander, "I want your girl, sir. I came to ask your permission.

That's not been my way—asking permission. But I ask it now. I am in your debt, sir."

"Sit down," said Dowser.

For a few minutes neither spoke. Then, turning to Lowrie, Dowser said—

"The sea is no place for a woman."

"I can get a good command, sir. A steam command with good money in it, and chances to make side money as well. My wife can live ashore, sir."

"Said anything to my girl?" asked Dowser.

"No, sir—nothing. I wanted to play square with you."

They were silent again for a while. Then Lowrie spoke—

"I would rather quit the sea, sir, than give up Nance."

"Nance has got sea-fever. She'd turn you down like a shot if you quit the sea I imagine—maybe you'd better quit. I don't know what to say," said Dowser. Turning about, he stared hard at Lowrie.

"Are you sure of yourself?"

"I could have said all I have said now years ago, sir. But I have waited. I don't think you need question that I am sure."

"Nance is young—very young. If you can wait, so can she wait. You'd better wait a while I think."

"Captain Dowser, may I speak to her, sir? I'd like to know her answer."

Dowser arose and paced the little room. Stopping in front of the picture of the woman on the wall, he said:

"We waited—waited for years; and the sea took toll at the end of it. Nance is very young. I'd rather you waited a while, Lowrie. I don't want any mistakes made—she's all I've got."

"This craze she has for the sea will pass as she grows older," he continued, "and she'll settle down. Take her now and there'll be no keeping her ashore. She'll be like her mother was—wanting to follow the long cold furrows of the fenceless meadows; witched by the stars and the moon on the water and the roar of the gales. Lowrie, I hate the sea. It has robbed me—robbed me of my life. Wait a while and let my girl settle down."

He gazed at the face of Nance's mother; and Lowrie, seeing the tenseness of his face, thrust out a hand.

"Captain Dowser, you didn't have to back your yards that morning off the Horn, sir. I guess I can pay my debt."

Dowser took the proffered hand.

"Thank you," he said and added—

"There's no other man I would ask for her."

The following day Lowrie bade the River Bottom farm good-by.

"I'm going down to a little place called the Ojai Valley," he said. "It's a God-forgotten hole, they tell me; dry as bone-dust, and hidden in the hills. A few months there and I'll be able to go to sea again. They say it'll cook all the wheezes out of a man for good."

Nance bade him good-by, under the cottonwoods beside the gate, her large eyes fixed upon his face.

"I hope it will cure you," she said.

He took her proffered hand a moment, fighting himself, saying—

"So-long, Miss Dowser, some day I'll be back."

Clyde De Witt drove him to the depot. As they stood awaiting the arrival of the train Clyde asked him—

"D'you reckon a guy like me could get a job on a ship?"

Lowrie laughed.

"Any one can get a job on a ship," he said. "It's a hard old life though, sonny, and if you take my advice you'll stay on the farm."

The train came and they parted company, De Witt going back to the farm with Lowrie's words in his ears.

"Any one can get a job on a ship." He forgot the rest of them.

A few days later, when his father called him for the morning milking, he was gone; leaving the old folks helplessly perplexed. Two days after his departure there came a letter from him:

Ship "Kenilworth."

San Francisco.

dere folks i'm goin to take a trip to see i reckon its good to go abowt an see things sum. Wen i get to the forrin contrys will wrte you all abowt it. you dont need to fus i will be o k

yr son Clyde

ps how is that ther sik carf a comin now?

De Witt was furious, and his old wife cried with sorrow and with anger mixed.

"It's that ther good-fer-nothin' gal o' that old fool Dowser's wot's ben an' done this," she shouted. "I'm a-goin' right over an' tell him wot I thinks of his likes."

"You kip quiet," said De Witt. "I'm a-goin' over an' see Dowser. 'Tain't no good to raise a holler afore you know wot's done it. Jest you kip your trap shet an' don't holler so."

De Witt went over, taking his boy's letter; and thrust it into Dowser's hand, saying—

"Read that——."

Dowser read it.

Looking inquiringly at the old farmer, he asked—

"What seems to be the trouble, neighbor?"

De Witt, half-rising in his seat, cried:

"Trouble? Trouble? You'd orter know what the trouble is! That fool gal o' yours done it. That's what's the trouble."

"De Witt," said the other, "don't let's make any mistakes. We might regret them."

They sat opposite each other, their eyes meeting, and presently old De Witt spoke:

"Neighbor, my boy's all I've got. Your gal's the same by you I reckon. I ain't a-wantin' to be hasty, an' I apologizes ef I bin talkin' rough-like. But what's done got this here thing to Clyde's head?"

"Did he ever say anything to you about Nance?" asked Dowser.

"Never a word. I've a-hearn his mother a-rowin' at him, she thinkin' he was crazed-like fer your gal. He ain't never said one word to me."

For a few minutes Dowser sat silent; and then, walking up and down, told the old farmer of his son's visit to him.

"De Witt, I told him this. I said: 'You go plow your own furrow and see what comes of it. I like a man to shift for himself. Your pa did his own digging, and I did mine. I've got no advice for you. Pull your own oar—if there's man in you it'll come out.' De Witt, did I tell your boy wrong?"

"By God, no! You done fine, neighbor. You got the gift o' the words which is wot I lacks. Wot's made him get this notion to his head though? Do you reckon he ain't got it from your gal?"

"He told me he hadn't spoken to my girl, and wouldn't," replied Dowser.

"Then by God, he ain't! My boy ain't no liar. I'll answer fer that."

"I believe you. I like him, De Witt. He's a man—just needs a little rub."

The old farmer held out his hand and Dowser took it.

"It'll come out all right," he said.

"What's this he's gone an' tackled, neighbor? D'you reckon as how it'll come out fer good? I don't know nothin', an' the old woman's jest plumb crazy with the whole idee."

Dowser assured him that all would be well.

"The sea's a bit rough for youngsters sometimes," he said, "but you don't need to worry. He'll come back a husky."

The Winter passed with no news of either Lowrie or of Clyde De Witt. The *Fancy Nan* was still at sea on foreign charters, and not likely to be home for many months.

It was mid-April, and the hay was ripening toward the first cutting, when John Lowrie again came through the gate between the cottonwoods. There was no one at the house, and he sat upon the door-step looking through the trees, over the shimmering hay-fields toward the fences of the River Bottom farm. Nance, coming from the bottoms, found him there, and crying, "Good day, stranger; where are you from?" held out her hand.

"How is every one?" he asked. "You are looking shipshape as ever—fit for any weather. How's the captain? And Moses? And Nelson?"

"Every one is 'all sir-garney-oh,' Mr. Lowrie. What of your loose screw?"

"If that hole in the hills hasn't tightened my loose screw, there's no use trying to tighten it. I've been fried, baked and roasted since I saw you. I've lived like a squirrel in a cage—me for the fenceless meadows!"

Nance's eyes flashed; her cheeks flushing, and the spring sun warm in the strands of her hair. Tossing her head, she sniffed at the wind.

"Do you know, Mr. Lowrie," she cried, "I sometimes think, when the wind is northerly, that I can smell the open water? I want to go to sea again, too. You are not the only one who feels cramped ashore. Wait till the *Fancy Nan* comes home—then dad's going to let me take a trip to sea."

"I'll be getting along then, myself," he laughed, "so that you can back that mainyard again, and give me another lift, when we meet on the windy meadows."

Dowser was coming up the road, and they went to meet him. He shook hands, asking after the loose screw. Lowrie, asking after the De Witts, and hearing that young De Witt had gone to sea, opened his eyes.

"Lowrie, you pretty nearly got me in bad with those old people. I believe it was all your doing. They put it at my door," said Dowser.

"Well, sir, that would have been a pity, to have made bad blood between neighbors. He did ask me about getting a job on a ship, I remember, and I advised him to stay on the farm. What's the news of him?"

"None. He went with the *Kenilworth*. You know

her? A Maine bark. Old Murphy, who used to have the *Shenandoah*, has her; and if he handles her as he handled the *Shenandoah*—well; farmer boy's coming home with a salt-pickled skin."

Lowrie asked for shipping news.

"Haven't seen a shipping paper or a ship since I saw you last, sir."

"There are a lot of your limejuice ships laying up about the bay, it seems. Freights haven't been any too good lately. They are starting to pick up again now, I think. I noticed the other day that a Liverpool full-rigger, the *Aldebaran*, was wanting a mate," said Dowser.

"The *Aldebaran*, eh? Not for me, sir! I've sailed once in those John Lupin Company ships when I was an apprentice on the old *Silversea*. Talk about starvation! Why, they are known as the hungriest ships out of Liverpool! And that is out of anywhere, you know."

Together they walked to the house, talking of ships and of the changing days at sea; with steamers taking all the trade, and the clippers fast going.

"I want just one more voyage in sail before I quit for steam," said Lowrie, and added, "Miss Dowser, you'll be interested to hear that I've taken out my papers—my first ones—after a while I'm going to be a hard-case Yankee."

Nance flushed with pleasure.

"Mr. Lowrie, that's fine. Why don't you look for an American ship right away?"

"Maybe I'll do that," he answered.

He stayed at the farm for a few days, going over to see the old De Witts, and telling them of the conversation at the depot with Clyde. They were glad

to see him, and forgave him readily for any influence he might have had in sending their son to sea.

The alfalfa-checks were covered with irrigation water, and a cool breeze blew off the fields on the day when he left for San Francisco. From the gate between the cottonwoods Nance waved good-by to him.

"I shall be looking for the *Fancy Nan*," he had said to her. "Maybe you'll be giving me another lift one of these days."

The evening before he went he told her father:

"I shall be coming back, sir, after awhile. You know what for."

Dowser nodded his head.

Three days after he left them a letter came for Dowser from him. He had signed on with the *May Flint*, a large Salem ship, bound for Europe.

"Not my kind of a ship," he wrote. "She's too big and unhandy for me; but I guess I can stick her for one voyage."

They read of the sailing of the *May Flint*, and heard no more of him.

A week or so after his departure old De Witt came hurrying over one afternoon, his face wet with sweat, and the alfalfa-leaves thick upon his hat and jumper.

"Look at that," he cried, thrusting a letter into Dowser's hand. It was from Clyde, in New York.

"Read it, neighbor, read it," the old fellow shouted; and Dowser, opening the folded paper, read:

dere folks,

wen im back ther wont be no more seein the world fer me i done seen all i needs ter see. I never knew wot a mess o water ther wuz beleve me you ort ter see my arms i tell you you kin lay off all your

*help wen i cum home the see is fine fer them wot like
it but not fer me. i will be home in five or six munths
they say with luv from yr son*

CLYDE.

The old man was beside himself with delight.

"You folks has got something wrong in your systems, neighbor, that's all," he said, as Dowser, smiling, shook his head.

"'Tain't not natural nohow fer no person to want to fool away time on the water thataway. No siree. My boy's got a heap more sense than some folks give him credit fer, I reckon."

"De Witt, I guess we're not all built alike," said Dowser. "I'm glad for your sake and your wife's that he is coming home. I'll bet you won't know him."

When Nance, visiting Mrs. De Witt that evening, heard of the letter, she smiled.

"You folks wot likes a mess o' salty water better nor good dry dirt ain't not natural, nohow, Miss Nance Dowser," said the old woman. "That's all there be to that. My, jest ter think o' spendin' a whole year on a ship."

"Maybe you're right, Mrs. De Witt," laughed Nance. "I guess I'm one of the crazy ones."

"Well, you kin jest stay as crazy as you've a mind to, miss, so long as none of us ain't likely ter be a-catchin' of it—that's all I got ter say!"

VIII

In July news came from the *Fancy Nan*. She was loading for San Francisco and Tattersall was going to drive her home. Nance was delighted.

"Pa," she said, "when she goes to sea again I want to go with her. May I?"

Dowser shook his head.

"Nance," he said, "I'm too old to go to sea. I've lost out. My days are done."

She sat on his chair, her arms about his neck and her cheek against his.

"Pa, dear, you don't have to go on the bridge. The barque's got plenty of cabin space, hasn't she?"

"Tattersall won't go unless I'm sailing her, girl. We went to sea together, and we sailed together year after year, ever so long before you were born. He's a bit queer about it; but he's absolutely obstinate. If I went to sea as a passenger he'd resign and go in the fo'csle—or try to."

"Tell me all about it, pa. What made him that way?"

"Too long a tale for now, dear. It would take a whole dog-watch. I'll tell you some time, maybe."

"Supposing you stayed ashore, and I went, don't you think Mr. Tattersall can take care of me? Can't I take care of myself? Why, pa, I can work out a position just as well as you can."

"Shoofly hasn't much use for a woman aboard ship, girl," he answered.

"Well, I guess Shoofly don't own the *Fancy Nan*, does he? I reckon he'll take whatever cargo you want to ship, won't he, pa?"

"Suppose I don't want to ship it, Nance?"

"When you were twenty, did you want to stay ashore, pa?"

"I was a boy—that was different."

"Then you want me to grow hayseed in my hair already?"

"We'll see—we'll see when the time comes. I'm glad you're not like young De Witt, girl. I wouldn't like that."

"Perhaps she'll get a charter for the islands—a nice short trip; could you stand my being away that long, do you think?"

"Maybe I could get along without you that long. It would be hard though. We'll see when the ship comes in, eh?"

"All right, pa. We'll charter for the islands, the colonies or Valparaiso—all nice short runs and close to home. Why, you would scarcely have me out of your sight."

"We'll see when the time comes, Nance."

For Dowser the time came all too soon.

He called Moses to his room one day.

"Moses," he said, "the ship's coming in. Nance wants to go to sea with her. What'll we do?"

Moses, dreading the sea, shook his head; old, and knowing that once upon the open water the pangs of rheumatism would assail him.

"I can't go, Moses. What'll we do?"

Moses frowned. He was seventy and past, and looked eighty; but his arms, lean though they were, were sinewy and strong and his eye was clear.

"I'm good for a few voyages yet, sir," he said.

"Can't you talk it out of her, Moses?"

"Did you talk her mother out of it, sir? When the old *Nanette* left port twenty years ago? It's in the blood. What's in the blood must come out."

"I might get a charter for the islands; or at farthest for the colonies. I couldn't stand to send her round the Horn unless I were there too."

"That'll be all right, sir. I'll be there—Miss Nance will be taken care of."

"Moses, I suppose I'm an old fool. There's no sense in being afraid of letting the girl go to sea. Tattersall is the best sailor between the poles; and the barque a fine, well-fitted sea-boat. But I don't seem able to help it. A sort of dread has hung over me ever since that calm on the line, twenty years ago."

"I wish you'd not changed the ship's name, sir."

"God! You don't believe any rot of that sort, do you?" cried Dowser, starting.

"Captain Dowser, I've been a-many years at sea, an' seen queer things happen—as any man what follows the sea will. It's not for me to contradict any one. But I don't like to see a ship's name changed, sir. I can't help it."

"Well, it's done; and that's all there is to it. I reckon it won't hurt any one. If you can talk the girl out of her craze, so much the better. I hate to let you go with her. You're too old."

It was the middle of summer when Clyde De Witt came home. Seeing him, as he stepped on to the porch, his old mother shouted—

"Well, I swan, paw—look who's here."

Rushing from the dinner table and through the kitchen door, she flung her arms about the neck of her son.

Young De Witt, patting her gray head, kissed her hair.

"Maw," he said, "don't you git ter takin' on so. I ain't drowned. Pinch me, maw. I'm all alive an' a-kickin'."

Sniffing the air—

"Maw," he said, "what's fer dinner?"

She fled from him to the stove, and from the stove to the table, setting plates and dishes in profusion; shouting to De Witt to run to the separator house for a jug of cream, crying to her son—

“Set down, set down. My, but I guess you be starved.”

Sitting opposite him, she watched him eat. Old De Witt, who never laughed, grinned.

“Clyde,” he said, “you’re growed”

Pulling off his coat, Clyde hung it over the back of his chair, refilling his plate; his mother hedging him in, pushing dishes toward him, refilling his cup, saying continually—

“My, but I guess you be starved.”

Rolling up his sleeves, he bared a mighty arm.

“Feel o’ that, paw—got any hay ter pitch?”

Old De Witt looked at the arm of his son, home from the fenceless meadows, and slowly shaking his head, grinned.

“Maw,” he said, “what d’ye think of our boy?”

Mrs. De Witt, rising from the table, ran around to her son and throwing her arms about his neck cried—

“He’s his maw’s baby—that’s what he be.”

Her baby, his mouth full of dill pickles, kissed her.

“Clyde,” she cried, “you ain’t tried maw’s chow-chow—you got to try that.”

Clyde, reaching for the chow-chow and filling his mouth, kissed her again. He lay back in his chair, wiping his mouth.

“Maw, you don’t want er founder me, do yer?”

“Land sakes alive, Clyde!” she cried, “you ain’t ate nothin’.”

When Nelson called that afternoon they brought him in to see their son.

The old man shook the boy by the hand, welcoming him home.

"I was to have been a sailor too," he said. "I had two brothers once, and both of them was drowned at sea. My father, he was drowned at sea. I was to go to sea too; but my old mother, she cried it out of me. 'Peter,' she says, 'let's go to America, and forget the cold sea.' That's how I come to America. We was from up by Bergen way. It's fine to travel about and to see things. But my old mother, she cried me away from the sea."

Mrs. De Witt stared at the old man and, running to her son, threw her arms about his neck, kissing him.

The day following Clyde's return De Witt went to a dairy auction some distance from home, to be gone all day; and Clyde, with a team and wagon, went to town to attend to some farm business for him. In town, just outside the bakery, he came face to face with Ora Kelly; a tall girl with butter-color hair and pigeon-blue eyes.

Clyde had not seen a girl for a year—a year of hard work on shipboard, among hard men. For a moment he seemed to lose his breath, almost to gasp. Ora, a smile of welcome overspreading her face, held out her hand to him. He, fresh from the sea, his own hands rough from hauling on the salt ropes and gear of a ship, took it and held it; its softness fascinating him. Looking into her pigeon-blue eyes, his own lips parted, he watched a faint pink steal over her cheeks.

"Ory," he said, "c'mon in."

Her smile broadened and, accepting his invitation, she entered the bakery with him. Clyde, home from sea, jingled his money in his pocket.

"Ory, what ye goin' to hev?" he asked her; and fed her upon ice-cream, filling himself at the same time, raising his head to ask—

"How's the folks to home, Ory?" And to gaze at her butter-color hair and pink cheeks.

"Say, Ory, you're a-goin' to drive with me, ain't you?" he asked, remembering that they were far from home; and then, without waiting her answer, remembering his wagon, and looking at her starched frock, went to the 'phone, calling an employment agency.

"You folks send me a teamster, right away—tell him to jump along," he said.

And the man coming, showed him the team, and told him where to take it.

Calling a livery barn, he and Ora were in a few minutes driving together along the road toward the Upland farm.

Passing the road that branched off to Ora's home—

"Clyde," she cried, "the folks'll be a-wonderin' what's come to me."

"Let 'em wonder," he replied, slipping a wiry arm about her waist, "you're a-comin' over with me right now—after a bit I'll take you home, never you fear."

Arriving home, he waved an arm, encircling the buildings with its sweep.

"I'm a-goin' ter fix the old place all up, Ory—fit fer a gal like you ter live on," he said.

Ora blushed, wriggled her waist a little closer into the bend of his arm, and said nothing. She was used to country lovers—but here was a lover indeed.

When he returned from taking Ora Kelly home that night Mrs. De Witt fell upon his neck and wept, her cup of happiness brimming.

IX

The *May Flint*, homebound from Cardiff to San Francisco, lumbered through the seas, approaching the Horn, preventer sheets upon her upper topsails and weather boardings round her taffrail. Nearing the cape, she sent her royal yards to deck, preparing for heavy weather.

It came; the Horn gales meeting her as if they had long waited and watched for her coming, driving upon her with a fury that appeared unending. Sprays froze upon her deck houses and shrouds until she was coated with ice. For four full weeks she beat into the weather, until, at the closing of a day, catching a southerly wind, they crowded sail on her once more—driving her westerly. At midnight, the wind moaning from afar in the darkness, they swarmed aloft to shorten sail again.

On the weather fore yard-arm sat John Lowrie, her mate, hauling out upon the head earring; for they were reefing the foresail.

"Coming, sir?" shouted the sailor beside him, lighting out on the sail.

"Aye, coming it is—haul a little more."

The sailor hauled, his fingers raw from weeks of hauling frozen canvas.

"How's that, sir?"

"All well—tie your reef points," answered Lowrie, shouting above the whine of the rising wind. He lay back to take one more heave upon the earring, lashing it fast, and cried suddenly—

"Oh God!"

Clutching the yard with both hands, he held to his perch, trying to breathe, a needle seeming to stab his

side. The pain passing, he lashed the earring, and followed the hands from aloft.

A week later, standing one evening beside the skipper on the bridge, Lowrie put a hand to his side, wincing, a red hot needle stabbing him again. The pain passing, he coughed, harshly, dryly, with a racking sound. The skipper looked at him curiously, asking—

“What’s wrong with you, Lowrie?”

“Nothing to speak of I guess, sir,” he answered. “I got a sort of a spasm awhile ago on the fore-yard and it seems to come back every once in a while. Be all right soon, I guess.”

As the *May Flint* sailed northerly Lowrie’s cough became more and more pronounced, and he grew pale and thin; refusing to lay up even for a day.

The skipper, looking up the word “cough,” studied his medicine book. Unable to sleep, Lowrie gained uneasy rest in a half-sitting posture and, never rested, became irritable about the decks, ordering men upon absurd jobs, and swearing at sailors who did their work with seamanlike exactness.

They talked about him in the fo’csle; and old sailors, going to the bosun, shook their heads.

“The mate’s going crazy,” they said. “He’s crazy now—there ain’t no suitin’ him.”

“Sick or crazy, I don’t know which; but he’s going to spill the ship over if he ain’t watched,” replied the bosun, and went to the second mate.

“He’s a sick man,” said the second, shrugging his shoulders.

There came a day when the railings were being painted. The *May Flint’s* railings were white; and Lowrie set men to work upon them with every shade

of color in the paint locker. The skipper, seeing from the bridge that there was something wrong, went to the deck and spoke to Lowrie.

Lowrie, looking at him, was shaken by a fit of coughing, putting a hand to his side.

"Better come and lie down," said the skipper.

The bosun took charge of the deck; but in a few minutes Lowrie was back, staggering and swearing at the hands. The bosun, motioning to a sailor, they took his arms and tried to lead him away. He struggled, and becoming suddenly sane cried:

"Hell! What's the matter? I'm all right."

He tried to shake them away from him, but, with the hands looking on, they forced him to his room. No one had ever seen such a thing—a mate gone crazy at sea.

They lay him in his bunk and he sat up and coughed, a hand to his side; the skipper coming to look at him, puzzled; the medicine chest all but empty, holding nothing save a bottle of salts and a bottle of linseed oil. Going to it he mixed a glass of salts, bringing it to the mate, who sat up, holding it to his lips, trembling, his forehead hot, his side burning. Hearing the lap of the sea against the ship's side he sprang from his bunk, spilling the salts.

"Hell, sir! I'm all right," he said; the skipper holding him back; he struggling; and the carpenter and bosun coming from their dinners in the cabin, helping to quiet the sick man, lifting him back to his bunk; he lying prostrate, exhausted, the three of them watching him till he fell into an uneasy sleep.

"We may have to put the irons on him. He's liable to get dangerous," said the skipper, adding—"the salts are all gone—I don't know what to do for him."

It was the talk of the ship.

The bosun took his watch, while he lay in his bunk; waited upon by the steward, bringing him the fare of the sea—salt beef, pea soup, hard tack, canned vegetables, or canned tripe and onions.

The hands liked him, and, coming to the quarter-deck, inquired for him.

“Reckon ’twas that time in a boat, off the Horn, that started it, sir,” one of them said one day, asking the second how the sick man was getting along. The second, never having heard of it, asked what he meant.

“A week in a boat, sir, off old Stiff—picked up when the hands with him was about dead. They say that if it hadn’t been for him, sir, they’d all have died.”

The second speaking of it to the skipper, the skipper opened his eyes.

“That must have been the *Tekoa*—I heard about that.”

Shaking his head he went to Lowrie’s room; Lowrie staring at him, coughing.

“Mr. Lowrie, were you with the *Tekoa* that time, sir?”

Lowrie nodded, whispering, hoarsely, a hand to his side—

“Six days—in an open boat—” falling back, exhausted by the cough; the skipper watching him; his lips moving—

“Nance—” and, “I’m coming back, sir—you know what for—” smiling, he fell into a restless sleep.

X

The tug took the *Fancy Nan* outside the heads, and let her go. The wind was offshore, fresh from the

northeast and, lifting her heels, she danced to the tune it piped. They gave her her wings—courses, topsails, topgallants, royals, staysails and main skysail, gaff topsail and spanker.

Nance Dowser, by the taffrail, watched the shore-line fade. There was no ship upon the sea. The *Fancy Nan* was alone; the horizon shining as a gate wide open, with the sea-winds blowing through; the land a haze, growing rapidly fainter; the seas about her green, and blue to the westward.

Mr. Tattersall stared into the weather.

The mates, passing Nance, touching their hats, crying—

“A fine breeze you’ve brought us, Miss Dowser.”

The helmsman, a tow-headed man with broken teeth and a tobacco-stained mustache, stared at her, letting the ship, luffing to the wind, swamp her fore-deck with green water.

“Watch your course there,” shouted the mate.

The helmsman, muttering, “aye, aye, sir,” scowled at the girl, as the mate went forward.

The sun dipped under the sea-rim, leaving a sky aflame, shining with ribbons of scarlet and draperies of gold; a darkening sea, green along the ridges, shadowy black in the hollows; stars twinkling, hiding their lights beyond frayed curtains of cloud.

Old Moses, on the quarter-deck, buttoning his coat across his chest, shutting the wind out, watched the shore-line fade.

In the fo’csle they talked of Nance; jesting, speaking of the women they had known ashore.

“She’s the owner’s daughter,” said one.

“T’ell with her—a ship ain’t no place for a woman,” said another.

A little narrow-faced man named Billings, a fellow with a penetrating voice, shouted—

“I wisht I was the bloody mate.”

A large man, sitting half-naked, sewing buttons on his jumper, threw a sea-boot at him. It struck him full, and falling backward against the bunk, he swore at the sewer.

“You thinks you are damned smart,” he yelled; the sailors about him rocking to and fro with laughter; men from the watch on deck peering through the open ports, asking—

“What’s the joke?”

A voice called along the decks, and the watch ran to haul on the braces, checking the yards in; brace blocks rattling, and spars groaning high in the darkness, the sailors’ voices mingling with the drum of the wet wind through the spray-dripping rigging—

“Yo-o-o-o-o-o- oh-oh-oh-oh- ho-ho-ho-ho-haul-away-oh.”

Nance watched the yards swinging against the stars; the ship taking the wind on her quarter, running as a hound runs toward the hunting-meadows. At midnight she went below, to dream of old Nelson talking under the cottonwoods.

Day broke over a blue sea; the hands scrubbing the decks down by first dawn, scouring away the harbor grime, talking amongst themselves of the ship.

“Too much brass work, all soo-jee moo-jee,” said one.

“These Yank clippers ain’t no good for a man to go to sea in,” said another.

“No, you looks like you was raised in a starving limejuicer,” muttered a third scowling in remembrance.

"A man what follows the sea is a damned fool, any way you takes it," said an old man, a murmur of assent arising as he spoke.

"Get those rails swabbed off—look alive there!" said the mate, coming among them.

Bending to their work they were silent, rising to scowl after he had passed. Toward afternoon it blew up, and they took the topgallants off, snugging her down. At sunset, the wind falling, they set them again, singing as they sent them to the mast heads,

*"As I was walkin' down the street,
oh! roll the cotton down,
A dainty lass I chanced to meet,
oh! roll the cotton down.
I hoisted up my numbers high,
oh! roll the cotton down,
Says I 'I likes your rovin' eye,'
oh! roll the cotton down."*

Day fading, night swept over the sea-roads; a boundless glory of starshine. The weeks passed by, the *Fancy Nan* holding to her course day by day, with a trade on her heel.

Moses, below in the cabin, unbuttoned his coat as she sailed through the tropics; gazing through the cabin ports, watching the white horses racing the clipper; thinking of the farm and of Nelson and of the cottonwoods beside the gate; wishing he were there, home again from the windy meadows.

The barque made a fast run out, and Nance wrote to her father:

DEAR PA:

Captain Tattersall says I brought him luck. We kept a leading wind all the way to port from the

Golden Gate. We'll be home soon. Coming home we will drive her, pa.

Moses is well, and so am I. When we get back the leaves will be breaking on the cottonwoods. You must have the ship's numbers flying, or I shall get lonesome for her again. Perhaps we shall overhaul the "May Flint" on the way home, and leave Mr. Lowrie shaking his fists at us. Won't that be fun, pa?

She made a row of crosses under her letter, kisses from beyond the sea; and bade him not be lonely. She would soon be home.

At Sydney two of the hands deserted and had to be replaced. On the day she went to sea the new hands came aboard. There was a little man with a battered sun-downer on his head, a faded red shirt and a pair of dungarees so patched and mended that scarce a foot of the original was left, what with red patches, and with blue patches, and bits of canvas at the knees. He wore a wide leather belt with a big brass buckle in front of it, to hold him together, and came aboard bare-footed; a twisted blackened old pipe between his bearded lips.

The other was a man named Bock, a German, from the slums of Hamburg; over six feet tall; a man with immense arms and legs, and a terrific chest; with a yellow, pock-marked face, and red-rimmed watery eyes.

They came over the gangway together, carrying the old man's sea-chest—a great box built of camphor wood; something that the old fellow had traded for or bought or maybe stolen from a sailor's boarding-house; or that had maybe been given to him by a drunken, or by a dying sailor. It was covered all over

with paintings of square riggers under sail, and with crossed flags; and for handles had rope grummets, parceled and served, made maybe, in the dog-watch, on the line or in the trades—or maybe in the fo'csle of a ship hove to off Stiff.

Bock carried his dunnage slung over his shoulder in a long white canvas sack that somehow looked like a sailor all sewn up and ready for his burying, the way it hung, limp and lifeless, across the back of the man who bore it. Half-way across the gangway the old man stayed to rest, letting his end of the sea-chest down. Bock shouted at him, leering down upon him from his red-rimmed watery eyes.

"Come along, old Blood-and-bruises!" he said.

The little man looked up at Bock, and down at his patched dungarees—patches of red and of black upon the old faded blue.

"Aye, that's right. Blood an' bruises it is. You follow the sea long enough, an' you'll be Blood-an'-bruises too."

The mate called to them—

"Get forward there."

And the two sailors, answering, "Aye, aye, sir," lifted the camphor wood sea-chest and bore it forward to the fo'csle; the men in the fo'csle greeting them with curious glances, nodding toward the empty bunks.

"Skipped, did they?" asked Bock.

"Starved an' buried at sea, m'lad—same as you'll be. Ain't grub enough aboard this here packet to feed such a one as you."

Bock turned to the little man.

"Come on, old Blood-and-bruises," he said, "get this old ditty-box out of the gentlemen's way."

They all laughed, looking at the little man; and putting the sea-chest down, he turned to them.

"Aye! You'll be Blood-an'-bruises too, if you follows the sea long enough," he said.

"Skipper got his wife aboard?" asked Bock.

"The owner's daughter. 'Ow 'd you like to be the bloody mate?" said Billings.

Bock leered at him, his yellow teeth showing through parted lips.

From the deck the mate's voice called.

"Loose the tops'ls—four hands aloft. Man the windlass." And they hurried to the deck

Once more the barque was heading toward the open sea.

Moses, on the poop, beside Nance, rubbed his elbows; stiff with rheumatism; looking over the boom-end, as if trying to see home, beyond the sea. There was a beam wind, and the hands came aft to haul the spanker out; Bock and Billings staying to set the gaff tops'ls after the others had gone. Billings, climbing into the mizzen shrouds, to go aloft, bent down toward Bock, whispering—

"I wisht I was the bloody mate," and Bock guffawed, leering at Nance, standing with her back toward them, forward, at the break of the poop.

They gave the *Fancy Nan* all sail, and she burrowed her rail under, drenching the hands with a spray as they gathered aft at eight bells. At supper that evening Nance asked the skipper—

"How many days to 'Frisco, Mr. Tattersall?" And looking at her, seeming to listen to the cry of the wind on deck, he answered—

"My last voyage, Miss Dowser—my last voyage must be a fast one, eh?"

The mate looked at him, thinking, wondering, dreaming that maybe he could step into the old man's shoes; glancing at Nance; wondering if perhaps he could get any show there—going to sea with a ship like the *Fancy Nan*, and with a wife like Nance Dowser, the owner's daughter, aboard. "Ah, that would be high times," he thought.

"Nice girl, sir," he said, after Nance, arising, had closed the door behind her.

"Women's out of place on a ship," grunted the other, and followed her up, through the chart-house, to the poop.

"We'll doll her up this trip, sir," he said to the mate. "I want her to be looking her best when she comes in."

The mate nodded, "I like a trim ship, sir," he said.

The barque, holding leading winds and fair weather, they started to put the shine on her, holystoning the decks fore and aft, and dressing them with hot oil; scouring the poop-deck with sand and canvas; and the topgallant rails, and fife-rails, and skylights, with pumice and oil. As she came toward the equator she began to glisten. Men, hanging in bosun's chairs beside the swaying masts, painted them from topmast to deck. Men were aloft overhauling, black-leading, and painting brace blocks; reeving off new foot ropes, and tarring down the standing rigging, with varnish in the tar; so that the rigging flashed when the sun shone upon it.

The old man, rising from his knees, after four hours of holystoning, staring down at his dungarees muttered to himself—

"Blood an' bruises—the big stiff was right; that's wot it is—blood an' bruises."

Men, tired of the unceasing fine weather, and longing for a blow, growled at the constant scouring and painting. In the dog-watches, when the day's work was done, they were called out to sweat up sheets and halyards; resenting it; cursing under their breath, at the sea, and ships, and mates, and skippers. The breeze grew lighter as they neared the line, and the heat more intense.

"She'll pick up a breeze one of these days, and foot it for 'Frisco," said Tattersall. "Get the work done before the wind comes—she's likely to be taking water aboard when she gets a start."

The hands, kept at work in the heat of the line calms, sat about after the sweating up was done, too exhausted to sing or to dance; muttering hatred of the sea and ships; vowing that it should be their last voyage; quarreling amongst themselves; accusing one another of being liars, and shirkers, the older ones jeering at the ignorance of the young; the young sneering at the yarns of the old; all of them looking toward the poop, snarling at a sight of the skipper.

Old Sinclair, the oldest man amongst them, was consumed with jealousy for Bock, who, owing to his size, as well as to the foulness of his speech, had become a sort of leader in the fo'csle.

Bock was a man possessed of immense strength, his weight upon the ropes a source of constant wonder to the entire watch. With the exception of the two old men, who openly derided him, no one ventured to cross him; the narrow-faced man fawning upon him, currying favor, saying—

"Wait till we gets to 'Frisco, mate—I'll show ye a thing or two there."

Bock grinned at him, his yellow teeth showing;

leering, his red-rimmed eyes glinting with foul anticipations.

Sitting beside him upon the hatch, Billings would grin at him, saying—

"If I was as bloody like an ox as you are, Bock, I'd go an' ask 'em to let me work—s'welp me God, I would. I'd show 'em, by God, they wouldn't put one on me."

Bock grinned back at him—a grin of contempt, mistaken by Billings for flattery.

There came a morning, when the sea was smooth as glass, when Billings, aloft on the main, dreaming of the long-shore delights awaiting him, spilled tar from the pot slung to his belt; spattering the star-board quarter boat with numberless tiny specks of black. Calling him from aloft the mate asked—

"What in hell are you trying to do?"

He whined to the mate, lying:

"Mister, I got a touch o' the sun, an' didn't know wot I was doin'. S'welp me, sir, I didn't."

The boat, hoisted clear of the chocks, and the chocks knocked from under her, Billings and the old men were set to work to clean the tar from her paint work. Inured to the sea, the old man scrubbed diligently, in silence; Billings scrubbing when the mate was near by, and idling at every opportunity. The paint, old and flaky, came off in patches, and the old man, scouring the boat's bow, stepped suddenly backward, with an exclamation. "Wot's the matter, Blood? Wot's all the noise, eh?" asked Billings.

The old man pointed at the bow of the boat and Billings stepped to look.

"Gawd," he said, staring at the faded lettering upon the bow, "D." Turning to the old man he asked—

"Blood, wot the hell's the rest of it?"

He beckoned to a man working on the deck near by, pointing to the letter, saying:

"Look at that, eh! They've changed 'er bloody name—changed it, see?"

The man, looking up, went back to his work, mumbling to himself.

At eight bells, when the watch went below, they stood about the fo'csle door, gesticulating, pointing to the boat swinging clear of her skids; telling of ships that they had known, which, having had their names changed, had met with speedy dooms.

During the first dog-watch the wind came up in a stiff squall, with a deluge of rain, and they clewed up and furled the skysail; the wind abeam, and the ship racing while the squall lasted. In a little while it was calm again, the horizon on all sides overhung by squalls. Tattersall went to and from the chart-house, studying the barometer. Shortly after two bells another squall passed over her, and she again raced upon her course.

"Two or three more squalls like this and she'll pick up a steady trade and foot it for home," said Tattersall, watching her go.

That night there was a full moon, silvering a motionless sea, over which, in the distance, squalls crossed and recrossed their tracks.

Shortly after seven bells, Tattersall, on his way below, stopped to look at the barometer again and, looking out of the chart-house, called to the mate.

"Keep her as she is, sir. Don't take the royals off her if you can help it. I don't think you'll get anything stiffer than what we've had. Call me if there's any change."

A few minutes later, Nance, walking the poop, was joined by Moses, and stood beside him leaning on the taffrail.

The ship lay, with her yards on the backstays, on the starboard tack.

To windward a black mass was slowly overspreading and obliterating the sky.

Eight bells went, and the wheel and lookout were relieved; the voice of the lookout man crying along the deck—

“A-l-l-l-l’s well, sir.”

And the mate replying with the customary—

“All right.”

Billings, leaving the wheel, was relieved by Bock; giving him the course, and, as he did so, whispering:

“You wait till we get to ’Frisco—I’ll show you something then.”

Going to the bridge he repeated the course to the mate, who, peering into the binnacle, buttoned his oilskins against the torrent that was beginning to fall.

Leaving the poop, passing beneath where Nance and Moses stood, he heard Nance’s voice.

“‘With the rain before the wind tops’l halliards you must mind,’ ” she was saying, quoting an old proverb of the sea.

Billings, with the swift instinct of a coward, hesitated as he left the poop; loitering below the boat, thinking to himself that the ship might spill over; remembering that he had seen another name upon the boat and, recalling the tales to which he had listened in the dog-watch, becoming suddenly afraid.

As he stood there, directly beneath the break of the poop, where Nance and Moses stood, the squall caught her.

It came, unheralded and instant, in one terrific blast.

The mate, shouting an order, swung himself from the bridge; rushing toward the halliards—the ship reeling over beneath his feet, leaving him clambering, his hands outstretched before him, up the awful incline of her decks; his voice carried away and lost in the fury of the wind.

Moses, grasping Nance by the arm, shouted in her ear.

“The boat! Get to the boat!”

Nance, steadying herself, bracing into the wind, felt a sudden horror upon her; letting him push her toward the boat, shoving her before him, under the bridge rail and on to the skid, shouting the while.

“The boat! The boat!”

Reaching the gunwale Moses climbed over, and turning, seized Nance by her wrists, dragging her after him.

The ship lay as a creature stricken a death blow, trying to go ahead, but held down by the fury of the wind upon her sails; reeling far over, her spars pointing to the darkness above—hove down, and helpless in the wind and sea. Not a sail had carried away, nor a rope parted; the excellency of her rigging had doomed her.

As she lay over, trembling in the first fury of the squall, Tattersall rushed from the chart-house, shouting—his voice carried away, lost in the night.

From beneath the skids, Billings, terrified, rushed for the boat; seizing her stern and swarming over it; stumbling into Moses who yelled at him.

“The falls! Stand by to cut the falls.”

He drew his knife, and, standing at the falls, sawed

them with a dull edge. As he stood there, stunned by the wind, drenched by the torrent that hissed upon him, a huge body bore down, shouting as he fell:

"The falls! Cut the falls."

Bock, seizing the falls, waited with them in his hands.

The *Fancy Nan*, without a tremble in all her length, lay as if stunned; her spars pointing higher and higher into the night above her.

Suddenly, as it had smitten her, the squall passed away, and stars shone upon the hove-down bark. The night was utterly still, save for a faint seething from leeward where the squall swept along the sea.

Voices called along the deck, crying orders, shouting indistinguishable jumbles of words—every accent clear upon the deathlike silence of the surrounding sea.

The moon, stealing from the squall to leeward, silvered the sea, shining upon the gilded trucks and upturned golden yard-arms of the *Fancy Nan*; glistening all along her varnished weather rigging, and her burnished brass work; each shadow of her railing, shrouds and spars of her white and lifeless wings standing distinct upon the decks and on the water.

It was but a moment that she lay, helpless and beautiful, hove down beyond the power to rise, before, in the space of a breath, she disappeared from the span-gled pathway of the moonbeams upon the midnight sea.

In the track of the moonbeams there floated a boat, alone upon the water.

In her stern sheets sat Nance Dowser with Moses standing beside her, and amidships stood a gigantic

sailor, at whose feet there crouched a narrow-faced man who whined, driveling—

“They went an’ changed ’er bloody name.”

XI

Dawn came over a mirror-like sea, and Moses, taking the sail that lay rolled in the bottom of the boat, stretched an awning over her astern. Before dawn, finding a water-beaker and a small supply of biscuits he had moved them into the stern sheets. Toward dawn Nance had fallen asleep, and now, hurrying lest the two sailors who slept outstretched in the bows should awaken, he went quietly about his business, dropping overboard pieces of a broken oar, and the hatchet that lay in the locker, and moving the oars, lashed them securely to the thwarts, aft so that no one could move them from forward.

When the men awoke he was sitting staring across the sea.

Bock, awaking, stretched himself, yawning, and, kicking Billings, cried—

“Rise and shine there, you sleeper—rise and shine.”

Billings arose, crouching in the bottom, staring over the water, searching for a sail; and, seeing nothing save the sea and the sky, turning to Moses, asked—

“Wot about some eats, mister?”

Moses tossed him a small package, saying—

“Make it last—it’s all you’ll get.”

Billings, scowling at him, asked—

“Who in hell made you a skipper, eh?”

Moses, making no reply, put his hand inside his coat, drawing out an old pistol; and after looking at it, and across the sea, replaced it.

Billings looked at Bock, whispering—

"The old bastard, did you see that, eh?"

Bock looked at the old cook, meeting his eye, silent, expressionless.

"Wot about some water?" asked Billings; and Moses, filling a tin pannikin, set it upon a thwart amidships, saying:

"That does you till to-morrow—make it last."

The pannikin held a quart. Billings looked up at Bock, questioning.

Nance, awaking, gazed about her, and laying her head down, cried—thinking of Mr. Tattersall, and of the *Fancy Nan*.

All day she sat silent, with wet eyes; Moses passing her food, telling her to eat.

"We'll be picked up pretty soon, miss," he said.

As night fell he whispered to her:

"Stay awake a while, miss, and watch for me. I've got to get a little snooze. If either of them move this way wake me, quick."

Toward midnight he awoke, bidding her sleep, apologizing for having slept so long. Bock was asleep, but Billings was sitting wide awake, staring at Moses, through the moonlight.

"Mister," he said, "I'm perished for a drink—this big devil he swiped more nor his share to-day."

Moses made no reply. At dawn he passed their water forward; and Bock, taking the pannikin, put it to his lips, draining it, grinning. Billings screamed with fury and with fear.

Nance begged Moses to give him more water; Moses shaking his head.

Toward noon he bade Billings pass the pannikin and, the pistol in his hand, passed it back, a quarter full, saying—

"Make it last."

Billings stared at the pistol, and scowling at Bock, sipped the tepid water, smacking his dry lips.

"Wet your clothes—you'll get a little water that way," said Moses.

Billings did so, drawing his shirt over his head, thrusting it deep in the sea.

Moses, dipping a bucket overboard, wetted the awning that sheltered Nance; and served her regular allowances of food and of water.

Nance, sitting with her head bowed, cried—thinking of the *Fancy Nan*, and of Mr. Tattersall; of her father who would wait between the cottonwoods.

That night, when Moses lay down to sleep, she sat awake, staring across the water toward the shores of home; thinking of the things that had happened in her life—of the voyages she had made; and of the day that they picked up the *Tekoa's* boat; and, so thinking, fell asleep.

Bock was asleep; Billings lying in the bottom pretending to sleep, watching her. Seeing her head nod he waited a few minutes, then, rising quietly, stole softly aft. He was all but at the water-beaker when Moses, sleeping as a weasel sleeps, awoke. Springing up, his pistol in his hand, pointing it at Billings, he pulled the trigger.

Laughing in his face, pushing him aside, Billings made for the water-beaker, snarling.

"To hell with you."

The old cook, dropping the pistol overboard, put his hand under his coat, and, bringing out a short iron belaying-pin, paused a moment, staring around the horizon. There was nothing save the sea and the sky to be seen. With a swift motion he brought the pin

down upon the back of the thirst-maddened sailor's head; and Billings, dropping in the bottom of the boat, crumpled and was still.

Looking to where Bock lay sleeping, Moses bent down. With a great effort he raised the warm limp body to the gunwale; and holding it there a moment, let it go. With a splash it disappeared in the sea.

Nance stirred in her sleep, and, sitting beside her, Moses watched until she slept soundly. Then, rising to his feet, stood watching Bock. Bock, lying outstretched, immense and hideous in the glow of the yellow moonlight on his sallow features, made no motion.

When dawn returned three great fins cruised slowly to and fro, forward and back again, around the boat.

Bock, awaking, looked about him, searching for his shipmate. His lips parted, his irregular teeth showing, he stared at the fins cruising around him; the cruisers, swimming close beneath the gunwale, watching him as he stood above them. Turning, he stared at Moses, and grinning, passed the pannikin aft.

When Moses returned it, with half the previous allowance, he looked at the old cook from eyes that glistened strangely.

That day Moses cut down his own allowance of water; wetting his clothing regularly in the sea. All day the sharks cruised to and fro, watching; coming so close that it became impossible to put a hand in the sea.

When night fell Moses told Nance to lie down and sleep, and far into the night sat watching Bock. It was midnight, when, as the moon arose high above them, the big sailor began to nod, and Moses, watching him, presently knew that he slept.

For a long while he remained motionless, watching the sleeper, his eyes fixed steadily upon him.

At length, creeping forward, slowly, every sense alert, he stole behind the snoring sailor and stood upright, peering into the moonlight, searching the sea. There was nothing save the sea and the sky to be seen. He waited a while, staring all around the far-off horizons; the sleeping man reclining against the side of the boat at his feet.

Putting his hand under his coat he brought out the iron belaying-pin; and once more waited, looking over the sea. There was only the sea and the sky beneath the golden moon. He crept a step nearer to the sleeper, who suddenly, moving uneasily in his sleep, half-awakening, made as if to arise. With one swift stroke the old sea-cook brought the iron belaying-pin down upon his skull and crumpling, he lay, his great limbs twitching horribly, in the bottom of the boat.

Soon he was still, and Moses, bending down, tried to lift him; struggling in the yellow moonlight with the huge body, unable to move it. With the quiet precision of a seafaring man he unlashed the oars, taking the ropes from them and lashing the dead man's feet; making the handy-billy tackle from the locker fast to them, and slowly hauling the body forward, raising it across two oars laid fore and aft in the bow.

At length, unhooking the tackle, and unlashing the ropes, he threw them aside; standing with the corpse steadied across the boat's bow. Placing his arms under it with a quick heave he rolled it overboard; and involuntarily sprang backward as the fins sped, converging, toward the spot whence, from the motionless sea, bubbles arose.

Gazing for a few minutes about the horizon, he went

aft; and lying down at Nance's feet was immediately asleep.

Morning came again, and Nance, gazing around, shuddered, trembling at the great fins sweeping to and fro; gasping with horror as a monstrous shark, swimming close to the boat, seemed to watch her as it passed. Terrified she knelt in the bottom of the boat, hiding her face in her hands. Hearing her moving, Moses awoke, soothing her, saying that it could not now be long till they would be picked up. Staring at him, she asked where the others were—for not till now had she missed Billings.

"They drank sea-water, Miss Nance," he said. "They drank sea-water and went crazy in the night. They jumped over the side, miss."

Shuddering, she huddled in the bottom of the boat.

That day the old sea-cook cut his allowance of water yet more; doling it to Nance in tiny drops, making her drink it slowly; keeping her mouth moist; pretending to drink himself; gulping eagerly at the beaker-plug.

She thought he drank.

Night coming again, she slept peacefully, as if in her cabin aboard the barque—or in her room beneath the cottonwoods. Moses slept fitfully—staring across the sea in search of help.

Another day came and went; Moses still gulping at the water-beaker, pretending to swallow; passing her small allowance of water, and telling her to drink slowly; keeping his face from her—lest she see his lips.

Another night came, and again she slept, awaking refreshed. Again he gave her water, bidding her drink slowly.

When the next day came he no longer spoke to her—his lips too dry for speech. That night she slept fitfully, and, awaking, found him lying at her feet. Staring at him, she called to him by name, her own voice frightening her. Filling the pannikin brimful she pressed it to his lips, he staring into her eyes, shaking his head; motioning the pannikin away, pushing it toward her lips; she begging him to drink—he motioning her not to spill the water.

That night, when the moon arose, the old cook lay still, his head in her lap; she yet trying to put the pannikin between his lips. His head drooped and, dropping the pannikin, she screamed.

When morning returned she still sat with his head in her lap, under the awning, the pannikin at her feet. Picking it up she drained the beaker into it, holding it to his blackened lips, the water trickling down his white beard.

By noon the water was gone.

The sharks cruised to and fro, tireless, expectant—unseen by the girl who, crouching in the bottom of the boat, held the dead cook's head in her lap.

XII

The *May Flint* was sailing northerly, a light trade on her quarter. Her skipper was taking her mate's watch; for the mate dozed in his bunk below, raving when awake about an open boat, and calling to a woman named Nance. The sun shone on a sea scarce rippled by the catpaws that crossed it; every sail upon the great four-master gleaming white as she crept lazily across. Upon her fo'c'sle head two men watched the porpoises at play beneath her bow. Far away a school of bonito, hunting the flying-fish,

churned the sea to a lather. Putting a hand to his brow, watching the leaping bonito, one of them cried:

"Look over there—see? Two points on the beam. What is it? Can't be a boat, can it?"

The other, looking, turned toward the deck, his hand to his lips.

"Boat on the lee beam, sir."

There was a rush of men to the deck, crowding to the shrouds. The skipper, fetching his glasses from the chart-room, looked away on the beam.

"All hands on deck," he cried. "Helm up there! Square the cross-jack yard. Some of you clear away the port boat."

The helm was up, the braces checked in, the ship paying off down the all but indiscernible breeze, as the boat, dropping to the water, cast off and sped rapidly ahead of the slowly moving ship.

Coming up with the derelict boat, tossing their oars they swept alongside her; the second mate springing over her gunwale, peering under the awning that stretched over her aft.

"Two of you here, quick," he ordered as, raising the awning, he saw a girl who lay against the side of the boat, with the head of a white-bearded old man in her lap.

Lifting him from her, they laid him down, and, raising the girl, bore her to their boat; seizing the oars, straining upon them, making all haste to the slowly approaching ship.

Sitting in a running bowline, Nance Dowser in his arms, a sailor was quickly hoisted to the deck of the *May Flint*; the boat speeding back to the derelict.

They carried Nance to the skipper's bed, laying her gently down; and, bringing water, forced it be-

tween her swollen lips, trying to make her swallow; bathing her face and shoulders, and her scarce moving breast, with the cool water; chafing her hands, and speaking to her in gruff voices. Opening her eyes, she gazed at them, standing above her, her eyes frightened, her white hands motionless beside her.

They forced a trickle of water between her lips and, swallowing it, she leaned eagerly forward for more. They gave it to her, a very little at a time, still bathing her face and telling her that all was well. Presently she sank into a deep sleep, and they stole away, leaving one of their number to watch beside her.

With the old man in her bottom, the derelict boat was hoisted to the deck of the *May Flint*. Lifting him, they laid him on the quarter-deck; the sail-maker kneeling at his side—a man handy with a needle, taking measurements. They stood by while the sail-maker stitched, bare-headed, respectful to an old man with a white beard. They awaited the words of the skipper, reading from a little book, holding the canvas-shrouded form upon the railing—awaiting a sign.

They lowered him gently, easily, into the still, blue water, watching the white form slowly sink from sight.

The sea-cook of the old *Nanette*, and of the *Fancy Nan*, had gone to last anchorage. The pains of rheumatism would trouble him no more.

They searched the boat, looking for a sign of her name; and upon her bow found faint letters, faded and indiscernible.

“Look here,” cried a man; “she has had two names. It must have been a ship whose name had been changed.”

They gathered about her, looking, shaking their heads—old sailors confirmed in life-long superstitions

—young sailors convinced of the truth of sea stories to which they had listened in the dog-watches.

XIII

Nance, awaking thirsty after a long sleep, was given water; the skipper of the *May Flint* asking her what ship she was from, and she, puzzled, looking up at him from frightened eyes.

On the following day they led her to the poop, hoping that the sight of the ship, and of the sea, would bring her memory back to her. Leading her to the skylight they left her sitting there, looking straight across the sea, her mind a blank, overpowered by the horror of the open boat.

Under a steadily freshening wind the *May Flint*, with her royals on, was booming toward San Francisco, sprays slapping over her, green seas dropping their crested heads upon her waist.

Drawing near to port the wind hauled northerly and was colder. John Lowrie, in a high fever, stabbed with a hot needle, feeling the cold, coughed, tossing restlessly from side to side.

Upon a bright afternoon the *May Flint*, creeping to anchorage off the ferries, furled her topsails.

The skipper took the port doctor to look at Lowrie.

"Get him to hospital—he's rotten with pleurisy. He'll be all right with a little care. What have you been doing for him?"

When he heard, he shook his head, smiling.

"You deep-water sailors are stouter than oxen—any one else would have gone under," he said.

Going ashore he took Lowrie with him, and to St. Mary's hospital; where, between cool sheets, he breathed more easily and slept in comfort—muttering

in his sleep from time to time a woman's name, and saying—

"I'm coming back, sir."

The news that the *May Flint* had picked up a derelict boat spreading along the waterfront, the papers next day carried large head-lines; and printed rumors gleaned from sailors paid off from the *Flint*, and invented by imaginative reporters.

The name began with D, but had been erased, probably in painting the boat. The captain refuses to let any one see the woman who was rescued, in which he is upheld by the doctor. She is said to have gray hair, and is presumed to be of middle age.

Reporters, going aboard and looking at the boat, did not see that there had been more than one name on her.

On the following day there appeared in the overdue list the name of a London fullrigger, the *Ditton*; and again the papers carried large headlines.

The *Ditton's* skipper had his wife aboard; and the skipper of the *May Flint*, knowing the *Ditton* to be a slow old hooker that could barely have been where he had picked up the derelict boat, was puzzled.

Beneath the article on the supposed loss of the *Ditton* were these words—

A sailor from the May Flint has the peculiar superstition that the boat was from a ship whose name had been changed, and was therefore unlucky.

On the day the *May Flint* came in, Dowser, on the River Bottom farm, read the headlines. There was, as yet, no mention of a woman having been picked up.

The skipper of the *May Flint*, sorry for Nance, and anxious to protect her from the curious, had thus far kept it quiet.

On the following day, reading the news again, Dowser muttered:

"Shoofly was right—a woman's out of place aboard ship. Another ship gone, and skipper and wife with her—better than for one of them to have been left, though."

Nance, sitting in the cabin of the *May Flint*, silent and frightened, was seen by several doctors brought to see her by the skipper.

"Time—it'll take time. She may come out after a while," they said.

A week later, a full-rigger came in from sea with her fore-topgallantmast carried away, and anchored off the ferries close to the *May Flint*—the ship *Ditton*, of London.

Going aboard her, the skipper of the *Flint* brought back her skipper, and his wife, to his own ship with him. While the woman talked to Nance, getting no reply, the two skippers searched in the lockers of the boat.

The skipper of the *Ditton*, drawing something from the locker, held it up; showing it to the skipper of the *May Flint*, saying—

"What in God's name is this?"

"A doll!" replied the other, "there must have been a child aboard."

A young reporter, anxious for news, prowling below them, hearing what they said, hurried ashore.

Next morning, when the paper came to the River Bottom farm, Dowser cried:

"My good God! Could it have been the *Fancy Nan*?"

That evening he boarded the *May Flint*, looking a moment at the boat, then striding through the cabin door.

"My girl—where is she?" he cried.

The skipper of the *May Flint* left them together.

The River Bottom farm, subdivided and sold, has ceased to be. The Upland farm is still there, though larger than it was; for old De Witt bought up some of his old neighbor's acres, stretching his own fences out toward the river-bluffs.

Old De Witt is very old now; but may still be seen, at haying time, bringing a team from the hay-fields. His farm is the wonder of the countryside. He has a foreman, who works under the manager—for the old man has long since turned the management over to his son, Clyde.

Neighbors, bringing their wives and children, often come to visit. Ora, Clyde's wife, is very gracious to them all, and very proud of her husband. They look at him admiringly, asking him questions of the world outside, and listening to him telling strange tales of the sea and of ships.

As the conversation lapses the old foreman speaks:

"I was to have been a sailor too. I had two brothers once, and both of them was drowned at sea. My father, he was drowned at sea. I was to go to sea too, but my old mother cried it out of me. 'Peter,' she says, 'let's go to America and forget the cold sea.' That's how I come to America. We were from up by Bergen way. It's fine to travel about

and to see things. But my old mother, she cried me away from the sea."

Beside the water, at Sausalito, there is a little house, overgrown with flowers, and surrounded by tall trees, beneath whose shade there often sits an old man, gazing across the bay—watching the steamers come and go.

Sometimes, very seldom now, a square-rigger steals in upon the wind of afternoon and he, arising, peers hard at her through his glasses, as if expecting to see some well-remembered numbers breaking at her peak.

At his side there stands a woman, whose dark hair is intermingled with shining strands of gold, and threads of silver; watching, with him, the ship that comes to anchorage.

Sometimes, when the China mail comes in, a lean-faced man with quiet deep-brown eyes, stepping from the ferry, comes to the little house to stay a while; sitting with them of an evening in the flowery garden, and going, as the mists arise upon the bay, to sit before an open fire in a room whose windows look toward the distant city.

Upon the wall there hangs the picture of a clipper ship, with her three skysails set, her lee railing awash in the sea; beside it another, of a little bark with hands aloft stowing the royals as she comes to anchorage.

Above them hangs the picture of a dark-haired woman; below the picture of a girl.

Sometimes they stand together, arm in arm, looking at the pictures on the wall—and sometimes go to stand before a little shelf on which there sits an iron-headed doll—the idol of these people of the sea.

THE HOMEWARD BOUND

(Landfall)

THERE'S the gals at the bar, there's the beer,
There's a hat goin' round:
There's a packet moored down at the pier,—
There's a ship homeward bound.

The gals is all laughin', an' "clink"
Goes glasses together.
"Breast the bar, now, me bullies, an' drink!
We'll wish her fair weather!"

There's the Missioner standin' outside,
Wi' a prayer, an' a hymn,—
There's a gal flings the swingin' door wide,—
"An' why don't ye come in?"

An' the Missioner's shakin' his head
At the gals an' the boys.
'Twas the words of a prayer that he said,
But 'twas drowned in our noise!

.

There's a packet at sea, runnin' home,
An' all dizzy her spars!
An' her topsails is drippin' wi' foam,
An' she's scrapin' the stars!

There's a laugh on the sea, a low wail
In the heart o' the blow;

There's the ghostly dim shape of her sail,
An' there's ice an' there's snow!

There's the lads wi' their faces all white,
But a laugh on their lips!
An' there's God, lookin' down on His night,
An' He's watchin' His ships.

There's a packet that never came home,
There's white birds that fly by,
All free feathered an' bright as the foam,
As the stars in the sky!

.
An' ashore there's the glasses go round,
While the Mission men pray
For the packet they watched, "homeward bound"
At the breakin' of day.





